KC・DX
362

KC

完全復刻版

あしたのジョー8

KC

原作／高森朝雄
漫画／ちばてつや

講談社
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雑誌46340-62　　定価450円(本体437円)
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★★★★★★★★

〝さあ、お飲みなさい。そして、元の溌剌とした力石くんに戻るのよ。〟減量苦と渇きに耐えかねた力石に、葉子は一杯の白湯を……。丈・力石の宿命の一戦が火を噴く、話題の感動巨編第八弾！

オリジナルデザイン／水野石文
（水野プロダクション）

★★★★★★★★

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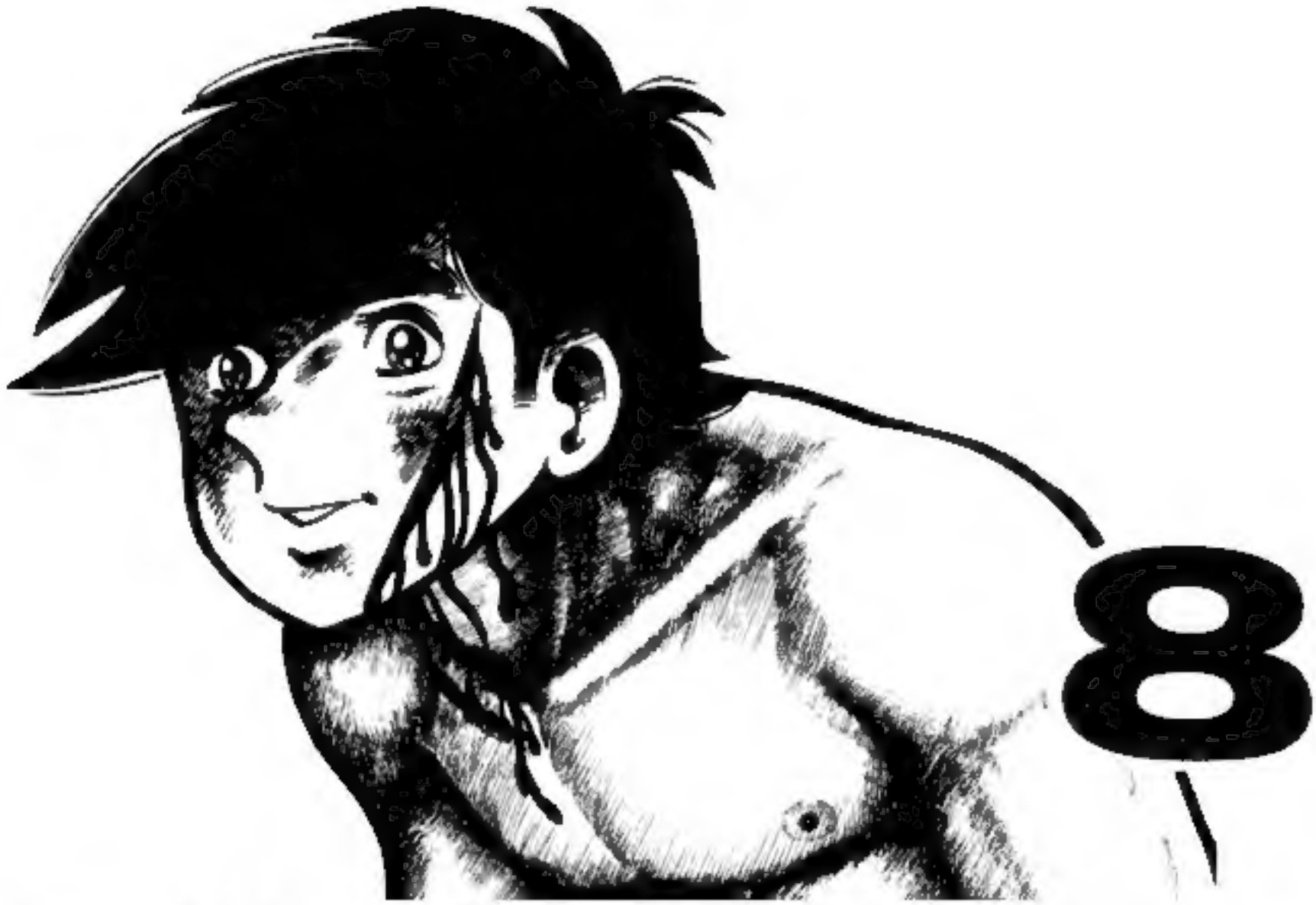


TOMORROW'S JOE 8

Written by Asao Takamori (Kajiwara Ikki)
Drawn by Chiba Tetsuya

宿敵力石　徹との対決を念願に、野性の少年矢吹　丈は、丹下拳闘クラブでプロボクサーへの練習に励み、ついに強打の新人として、リングにデビューした。

そしてまもなく、巧技の新人王、ウルフ金串の挑戦をうけ、壮烈な打ち合いの末、みごとなKO勝ちで、一躍〝殺し屋ジョー〟の異名をとどろかせた。

一方、力石　徹も、連戦連勝の無敵ぶりを発揮していたが、丈との対戦に異常な執念を燃やし、体重を丈と同じバンタム級に下げるために、飢えとかわきの耐えがたい減量苦とたたかいながら、はげしい練習をつづけていた。

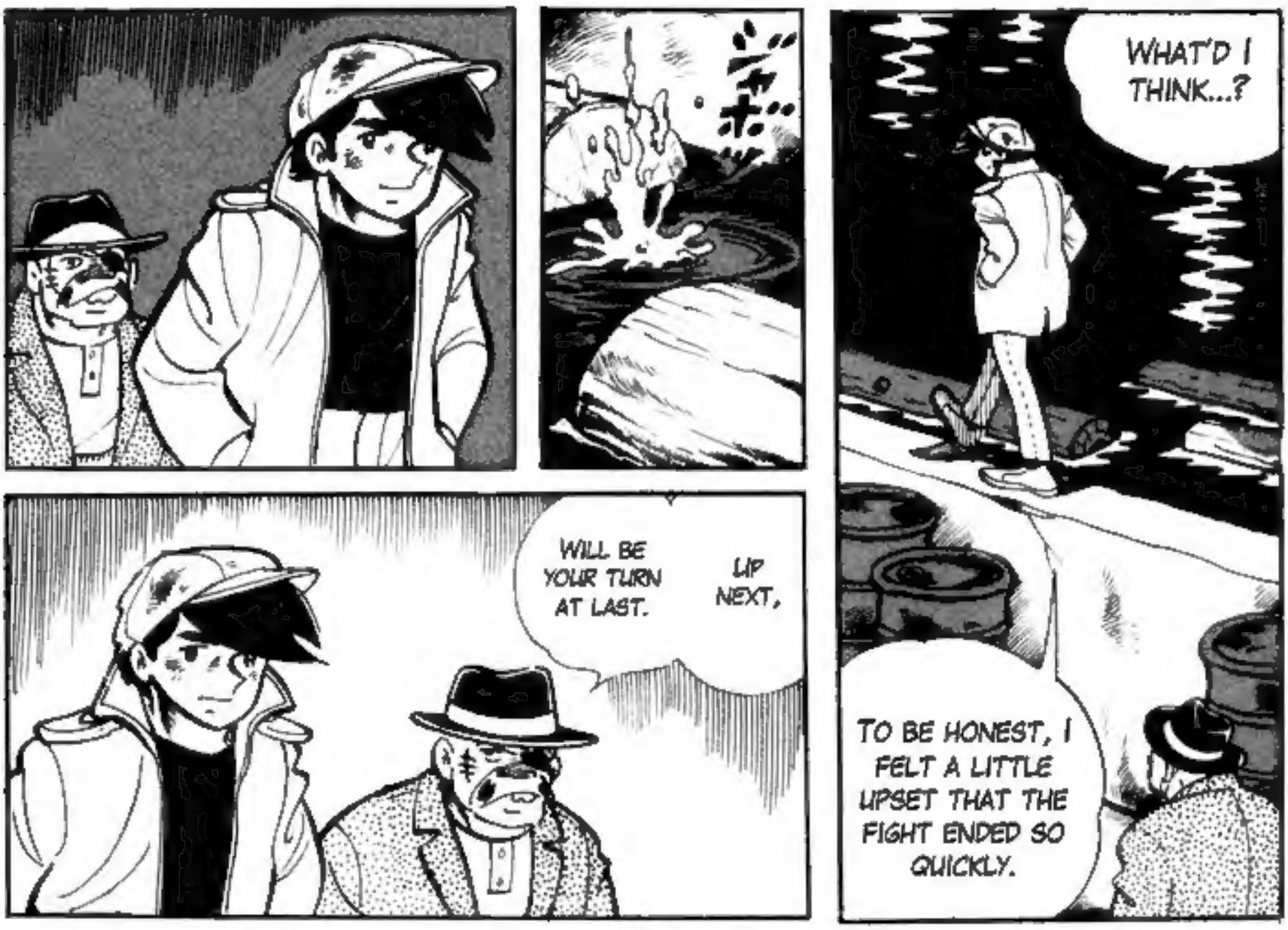
かくて、丈と力石との運命の対決の日は、日一日と近づいていた……。

★前巻までのあらすじ★

GOTTEN PRETTY CHILLY THESE DAYS...

WHAT'D YOU THINK OF THE FIGHT TONIGHT BETWEEN RIKIISHI AND LEO?

SO?


WHAT'D I THINK...?
TO BE HONEST, I FELT A LITTLE UPSET THAT THE FIGHT ENDED SO QUICKLY.
LIP NEXT, WILL BE YOUR TURN AT LAST.
I ALWAYS EXPECTED YOU TWO TO FIGHT ONE HELL OF A MATCH SOONER OR LATER BUT...
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CHANCES?
HAHA... MY CHANCES, HUH...

THIS TIME, IT'S DIFFERENT.

BUT,

THE REASON WHY I'VE WON ALL MY MATCHES UNTIL NOW IS BECAUSE OF THAT CONFIDENCE OF MINE...

BUT I'VE NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT WHETHER I'D WIN OR LOSE BEFORE A MATCH.

IT MIGHT SOUND LIKE I'M JUST TALKING TOUGH AND ALL,

IF I WERE TO TELL YOU MY TRUE FEELINGS, HE'S... A SCARY INDIVIDUAL.

I THOUGHT ABOUT MY FIGHTING CHANCES BUT CAME UP BLANK.

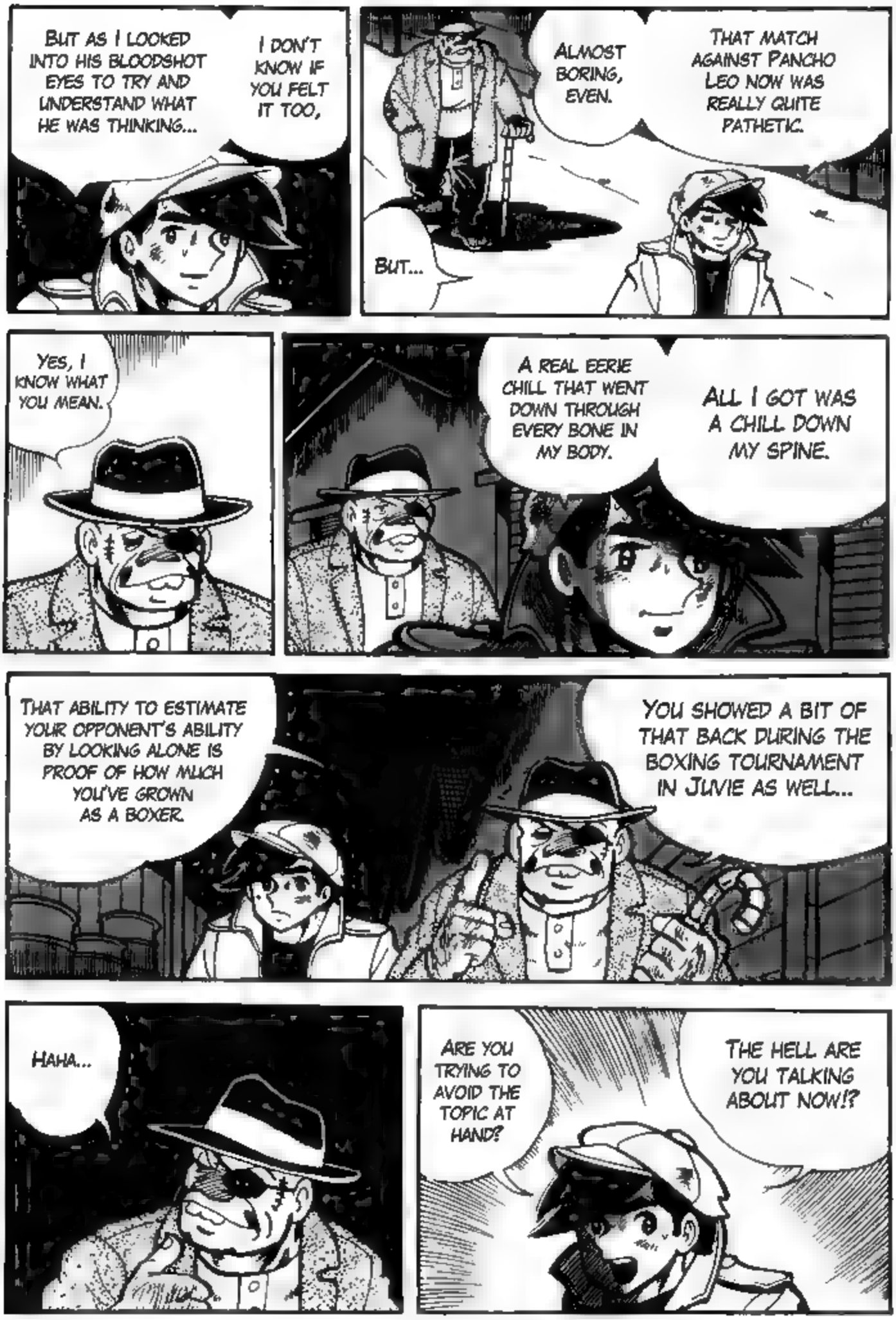
AFTER SEEING RIKIISHI'S BANDAGE-COVERED BODY AT THE END OF THAT MATCH,

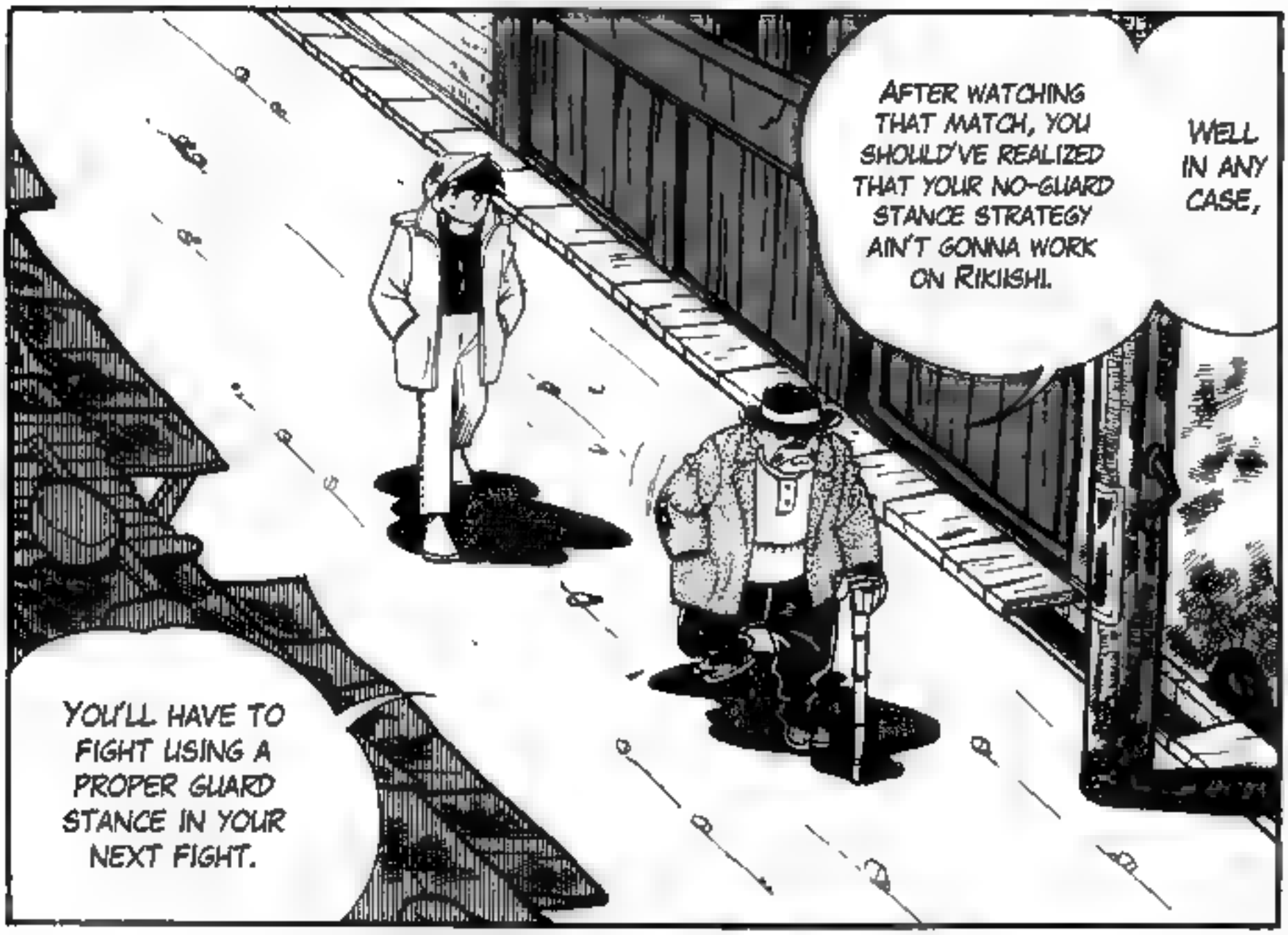
I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT HE'S PLANNING...

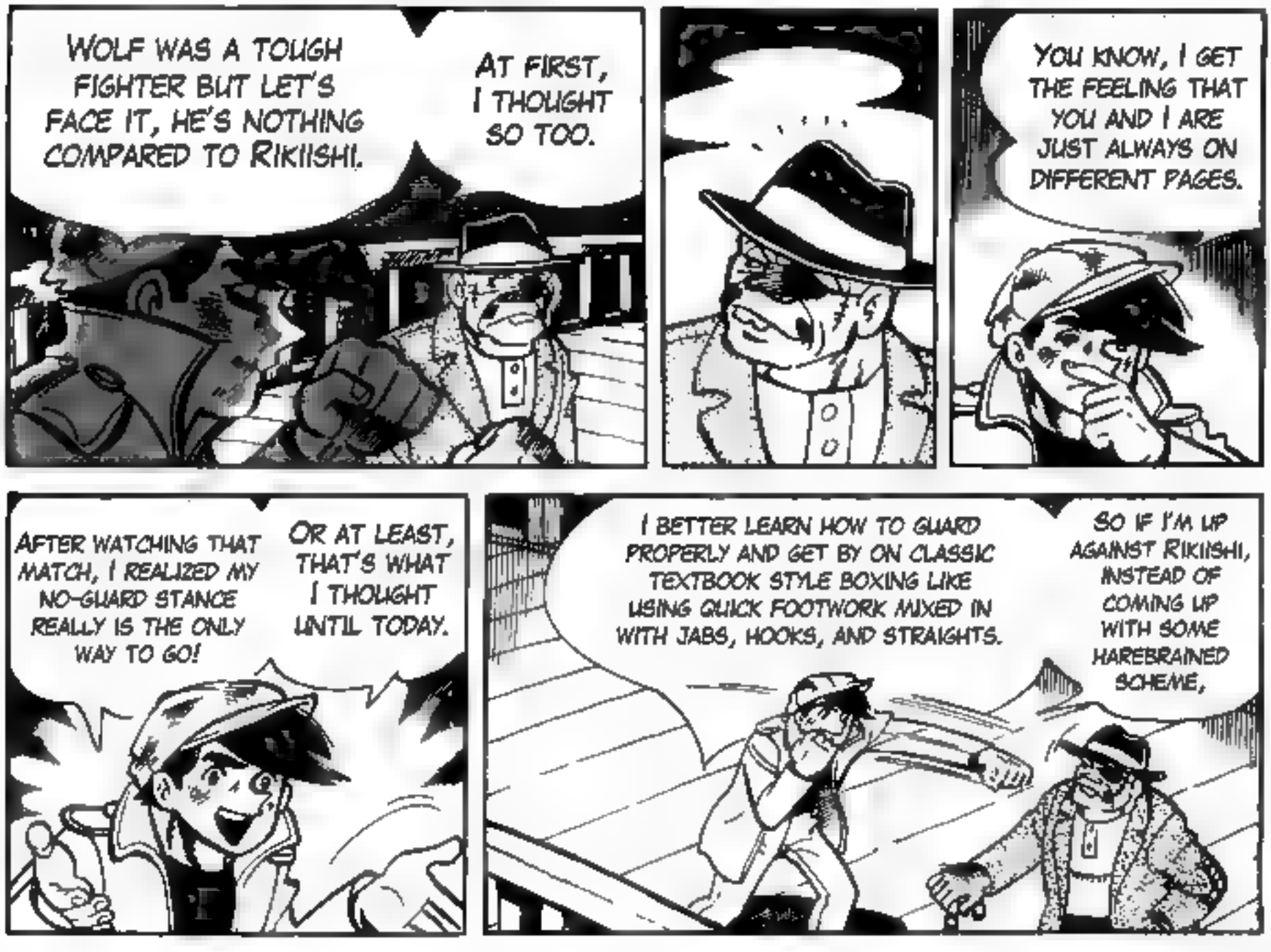
IT'S JUST...

I AIN'T BEING TIMID!

NEVER EXPECTED YOU OF ALL PEOPLE TO SOUND SO TIMID.


BUT AS I LOOKED INTO HIS BLOODSHOT EYES TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS THINKING...
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU FELT IT TOO,
ALMOST BORING, EVEN.
THAT MATCH AGAINST PANCHO LEO NOW WAS REALLY QUITE PATHETIC.
BUT...
YES, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
A REAL EERIE CHILL THAT WENT DOWN THROUGH EVERY BONE IN MY BODY.
ALL I GOT WAS A CHILL DOWN MY SPINE.
THAT ABILITY TO ESTIMATE YOUR OPPONENT'S ABILITY BY LOOKING ALONE IS PROOF OF HOW MUCH YOU'VE GROWN AS A BOXER.
YOU SHOWED A BIT OF THAT BACK DURING THE BOXING TOURNAMENT IN JUVIE AS WELL...
HAHA...
ARE YOU TRYING TO AVOID THE TOPIC AT HAND?
THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT NOW!?


AFTER WATCHING THAT MATCH, YOU SHOULD'VE REALIZED THAT YOUR NO-GUARD STANCE STRATEGY AIN'T GONNA WORK ON RIKIISHI.
WELL IN ANY CASE,
YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGHT USING A PROPER GUARD STANCE IN YOUR NEXT FIGHT.


WOLF WAS A TOUGH FIGHTER BUT LET'S FACE IT, HE'S NOTHING COMPARED TO RIKIISHI.
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT SO TOO.
YOU KNOW, I GET THE FEELING THAT YOU AND I ARE JUST ALWAYS ON DIFFERENT PAGES.
AFTER WATCHING THAT MATCH, I REALIZED MY NO-GUARD STANCE REALLY IS THE ONLY WAY TO GO!
OR AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT UNTIL TODAY.
I BETTER LEARN HOW TO GUARD PROPERLY AND GET BY ON CLASSIC TEXTBOOK STYLE BOXING LIKE USING QUICK FOOTWORK MIXED IN WITH JABS, HOOKS, AND STRAIGHTS.
SO IF I'M UP AGAINST RIKIISHI, INSTEAD OF COMING UP WITH SOME HAREBRAINED SCHEME,

NO, NO.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT RIKIISHI USED THAT UPPERCUT STRATEGY TO MAKE YOUR NO-GUARD STANCE USELESS!?

ARE YOU INSANE!?

WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS...

WHAT!?

WHA-

YOU GOT SOME LIP ON YOU, BOY...!

M-MY FRAIL BODY!?

AH, WHATEVER. TALKING OUTSIDE IN THE COLD NIGHT AIN'T GONNA BE GOOD FOR YOUR FRAIL BODY.

LET'S GO INSIDE FIRST.

I'LL EXPLAIN CLEARLY WHAT I MEAN IN THE GYM.

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HUH, THE LIGHTS ARE STILL ON...

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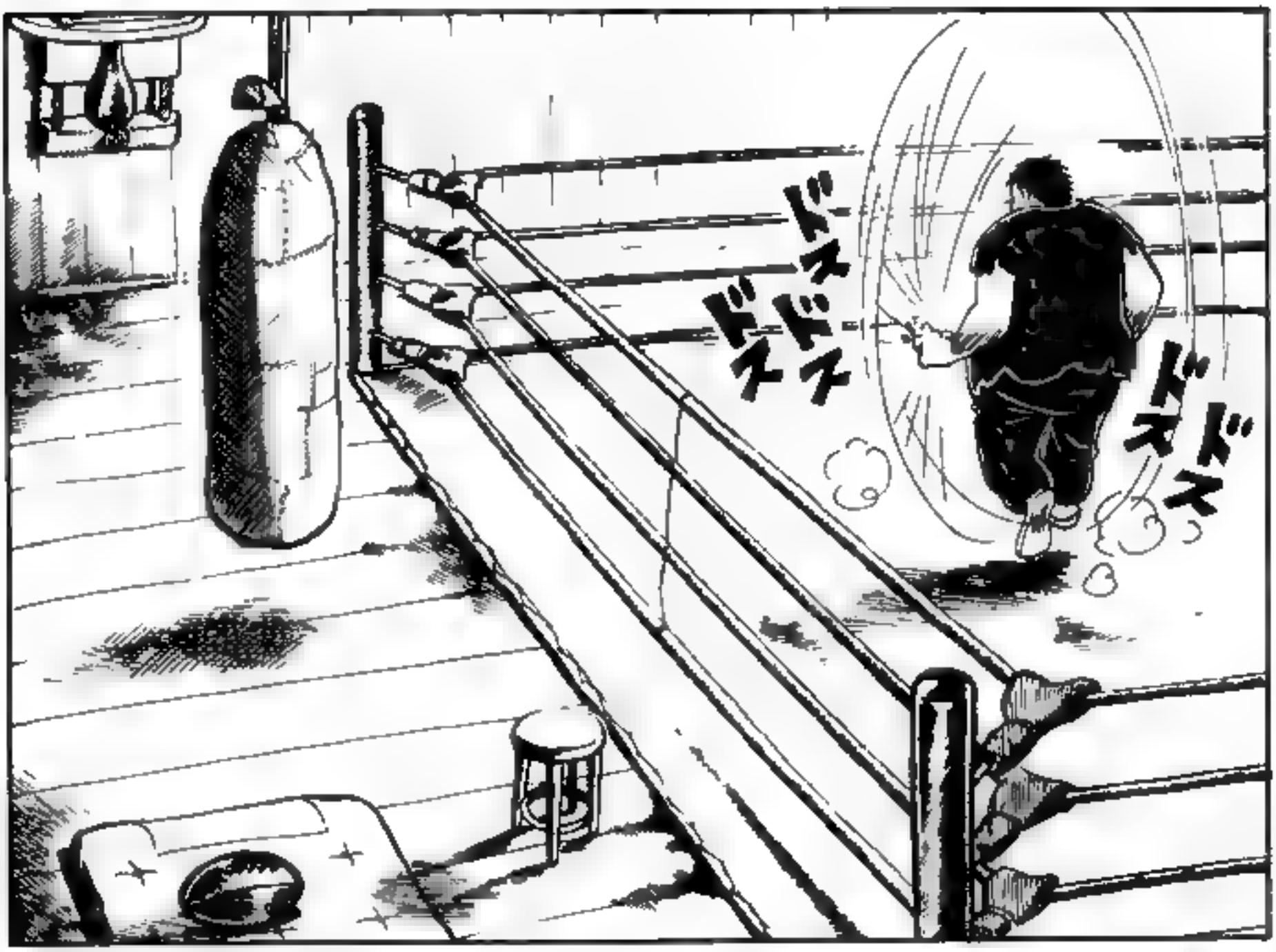
IS NISHI STILL AWAKE OR SOMETHING?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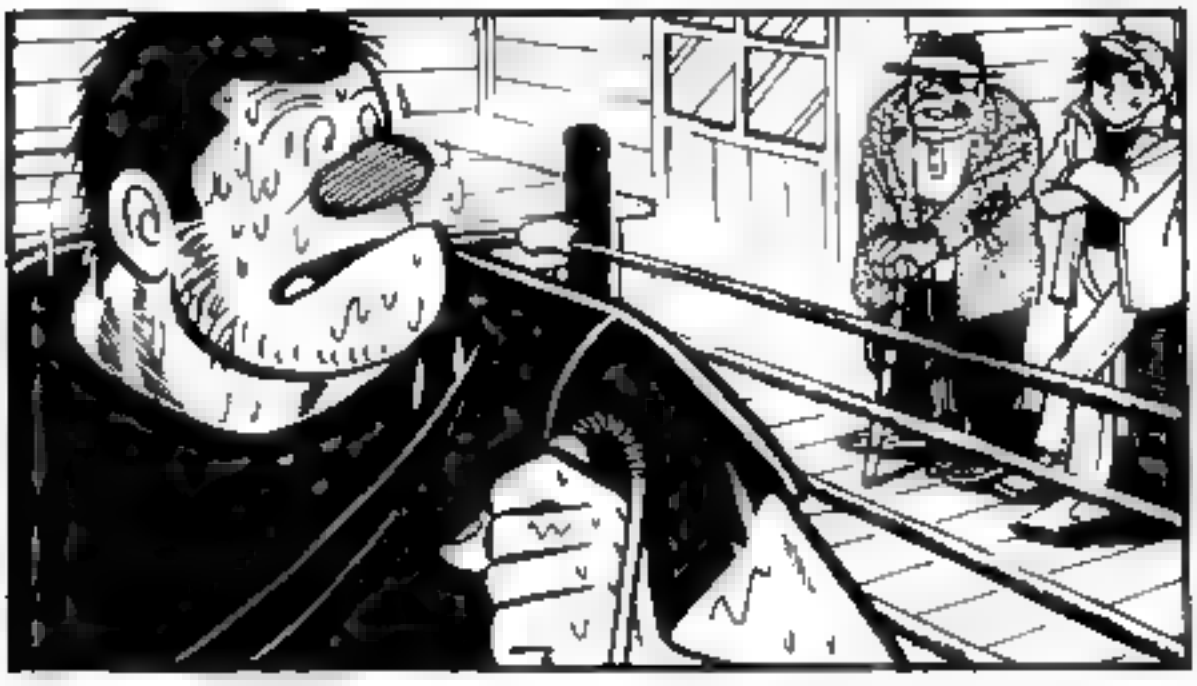


ドズ!!

NEVER THOUGHT SOMEONE WHO HATES TRAINING SO MUCH WOULD BE TRAINING HARD LATE INTO THE NIGHT.
AIN'T THIS A RARE SIGHT.
WELCOME HOME.
AH...
YEAH, WE'RE BACK.
I...
N-NO, IT'S NOTHING
はあ
はあ
.....
BUT FOR SOME REASON, I HAD TROUBLE FALLING ASLEEP SO...
I WAS TRYING TO GO TO BED EARLIER,
I WAS JUST KILLING TIME, THAT'S ALL.
WHAT'S TO APOLOGIZE ABOUT? KEEP ON TRAINING.
SORRY.
HE WON. KO IN ROUND 8.
HOW WAS RIKIISHI'S MATCH?
SO...
N-NO, IT'S FINE.
HA HA...

GET ON THE RING SO I CAN SHOW YOU WHAT I MEAN.

ALRIGHT, NOW TO CONTINUE THAT CONVERSATION FROM EARLIER...

IT IS RIKIISHI AFTER ALL...

NOT SURPRISING.

YOU WANT ME TO PUT ON GLOVES?

HERE.

OH AND PUT ON YOUR GLOVES.

SEEMS LIKE YOU ACTUALLY HAVE A PLAN FOR ONCE.

HM...

NO, NOT YET.

HAVE YOU AND JOE EATEN YET...?

UMM...

FINE, SHOW ME WHAT YOU MEAN.

O-OK...

IT'S GONNA BE A BUSY DAY AT WORK TOMO-RROW.

IT'S FINE SO JUST GO TO BED ALREADY.

OK, THEN I'LL GO PREPARE YOUR MEALS.

NOW AS WE SAW TODAY...

SURE THING.

I'VE PUT ON MY GLOVES. START YOUR EXPLANATION.

ALRIGHT...

SO LET'S SAY I WENT OUT WITH A PROPER GUARD.

くるり

RIKIISHI WILL BE USING HIS UPPERCUT STRATEGY TO MAKE MY CROSS COUNTERS USELESS.

ENOUGH TALKIN' AND HIT ME ALREADY!

ARE YOU SURE?

I MAY BE OLD BUT YOU SHOULD BE WELL AWARE OF HOW STRONG MY PUNCHES ARE...

GIVE ME A BIG UPPERCUT LIKE YOU DID TO ME LONG AGO!

SO COME ON, OLD MAN.

AH!

J-JOE! ARE YOU ALRIGHT, JOE!?

THIS IS WHAT'D HAPPEN IF I TRIED TO GUARD.

BUT IN ANY CASE,

'COURSE, I *DID* SLIGHTLY LOOSEN MY GUARD JUST TO ILLUSTRATE MY POINT BETTER.

THAT REALLY HURT...

OUCH,

A NORMAL GUARD IS STRONG AGAINST BLOWS DIRECTED TO THE FRONT OF THE FACE, BUT IT'S ANOTHER STORY WHEN TRYING TO DEFEND AGAINST UPPERCUTS COMING STRAIGHT FROM BELOW...

GOOD POINT...

THIS IS RIKIISHI WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! HE'D EASILY CRUSH THROUGH MY GUARD AND LAY ME FLAT!

BUT EVEN IF I CAN BLOCK AN UPPERCUT FROM AN OLD MAN LIKE YOU WITH A PROPER GUARD,

HMPH, I MAY BE OLD BUT NOT OLD ENOUGH TO SHUT THAT MOUTH OF YOURS.

FINE,

I FEEL GUILTY FOR MAKING AN OLD MAN LIKE YOU EXERT YOURSELF SO MUCH BUT IF YOUR BONES AIN'T BROKEN, THEN I WANT YOU TO TRY GIVING ME ANOTHER UPPERCUT.

THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO STICK WITH MY TRADEMARK NO-GUARD STANCE!

SEE!?

HERE I COME!

AH...

OH? WHERE YA GOING, OLD MAN?

W-WHOA...

HEH...

YOU ONLY GOT LUCKY THERE 'CAUSE MY AIM WAS SLIGHTLY OFF...

HMPH,

DARN IT...

HUFF

A SWING AND A MISS!

PREPARE YOURSELF!

BUT I WON'T MISS THIS TIME!

PANT PANT...

HUFF HUFF HUFF...

NOPE!

NUH UH!

TRY AGAIN!

MEANWHILE, USING A TRADITIONAL GUARD WOULD TIGHTEN UP MY UPPER BODY TOO MUCH FOR IT TO MOVE FLEXIBLY.

AND THIS STYLE GOES ALONG PERFECT WITH MY NO GUARD STANCE!

EVEN LEO SHOWED A BIT OF THIS DURING TODAY'S MATCH. THE BEST TACTIC AGAINST A BIG UPPERCUT IS WITH A LOOSE SWAY-BACK STYLE.

SHORT OF BREATH ALREADY?

HUFF

HUFF

ALL I DID WAS SWAY BACK AND FORTH A LITTLE.

OH PLEASE.

A NATURAL-BORN GENIUS.

YOU REALLY ARE SOMETHING.

IN BOXING ALONE,

A GOOD POINT, KID...

YOU MAKE... HUFF...

NISHI! WHAT'RE YOU DOING OVER THERE?

MY UPPERS AIN'T EVEN GONNA COME CLOSE TO WHAT HIS ARE LIKE!

BUT YOU REALIZE RIKIISHI'S ALSO A NATURAL!

THE RING?

'NUFF OF THAT FOR NOW AND JUST GET YOUR ASS ON THE RING RIGHT NOW!

JUST COOKING DINNER

HM? OH...

SWAPPING WITH NISHI 'CAUSE YOU'RE DEAD TIRED ALREADY?

WHAT,

ENOUGH TALKIN' AND GET A MOVE ON ALREADY!

AND PUT YOUR GLOVES ON.

QUICKLY.

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, RIKIISHI'S UPPERCUTS ARE GONNA BE ONE HELL OF A BLOW, IN TERMS OF SPEED, POWER, AND STAMINA.

LISTEN, JOE.

WH-

WHAT!?

W-

GOT IT!?

IN OTHER WORDS, NISHI AND I WILL BE GIVING YOU CONTINUOUS UPPERCUTS WITH ALL 4 OF OUR ARMS.

SO TO HELP PREPARE YOU FOR THAT, WE'LL BE SPARRING AGAINST YOU 1 ON 2!

. . . .

YOU'RE TO DODGE ONLY! NO COUNTER-ATTACKING!

AND JOE! SINCE THIS IS OBVIOUSLY GONNA BE SPECIAL SWAY-BACK TRAINING,

JUST ATTACK HIM WITH ONLY UPPERCUTS!

NISHI! I DON'T CARE IF YOU ATTACK JOE FROM THE FRONT, SIDE, OR WHATEVER.

YOUR CONCERNS ARE UNNEEDED! JUST DO WHAT I TELL YOU TO DO!

ATTACKING JOE 2 ON 1 WHILE HE ONLY DODGES SEEMS A LITTLE EXTREME... I DON'T KNOW IF-

UMM...

LET'S DO THIS!

LOOKS LIKE YOUR BRAIN CELLS HAVEN'T ALL SHRIVELLED UP AND DIED, OLD MAN.

GOOD IDEA...

MAYBE IF YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU CAN GET BACK AT ME FOR THE TIME I SOCKED YOU SO HARD THAT NOODLES CAME OUTTA YOUR NOSE.

LET ME SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

DON'T HOLD BACK, NISHI.

HEH HEH.

GET YOUR ASS OVER HERE!

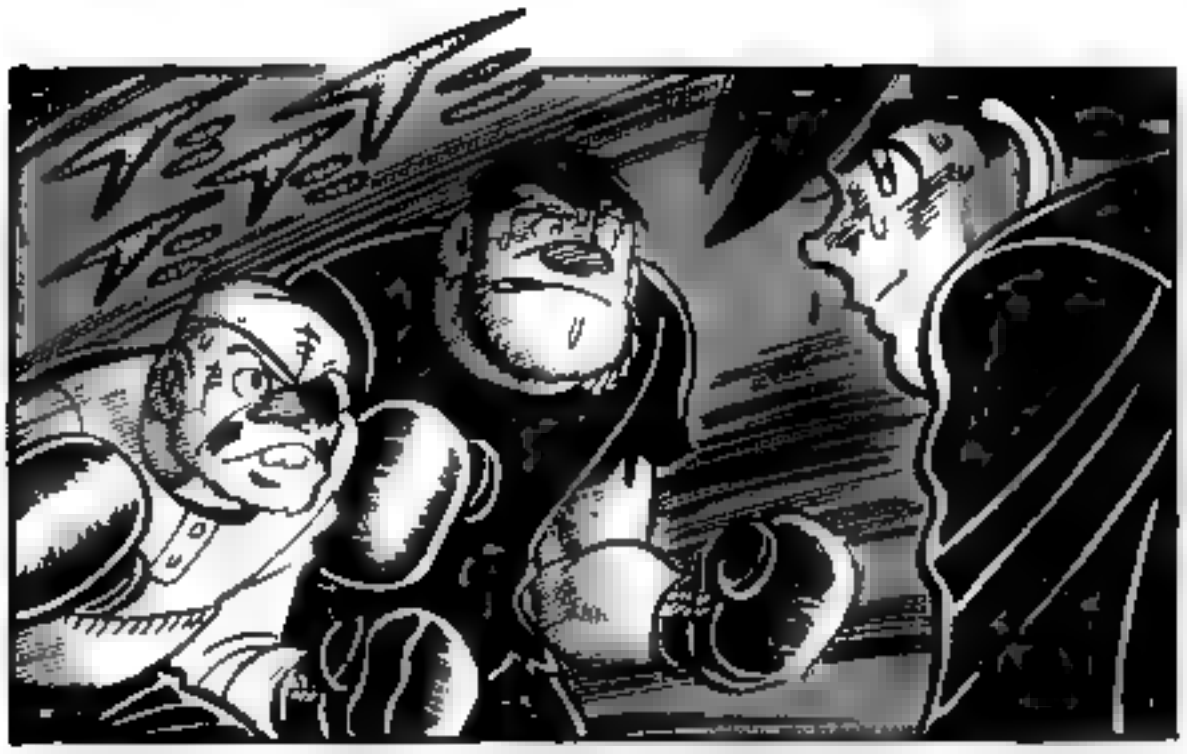
TALK ABOUT THAT TIME ANYMORE...

P-PLEASE DON'T...

READY WHEN YOU ARE...

OK,

WHAT'RE YOU JUST STANDING AROUND FOR!?


HERE WE COME!

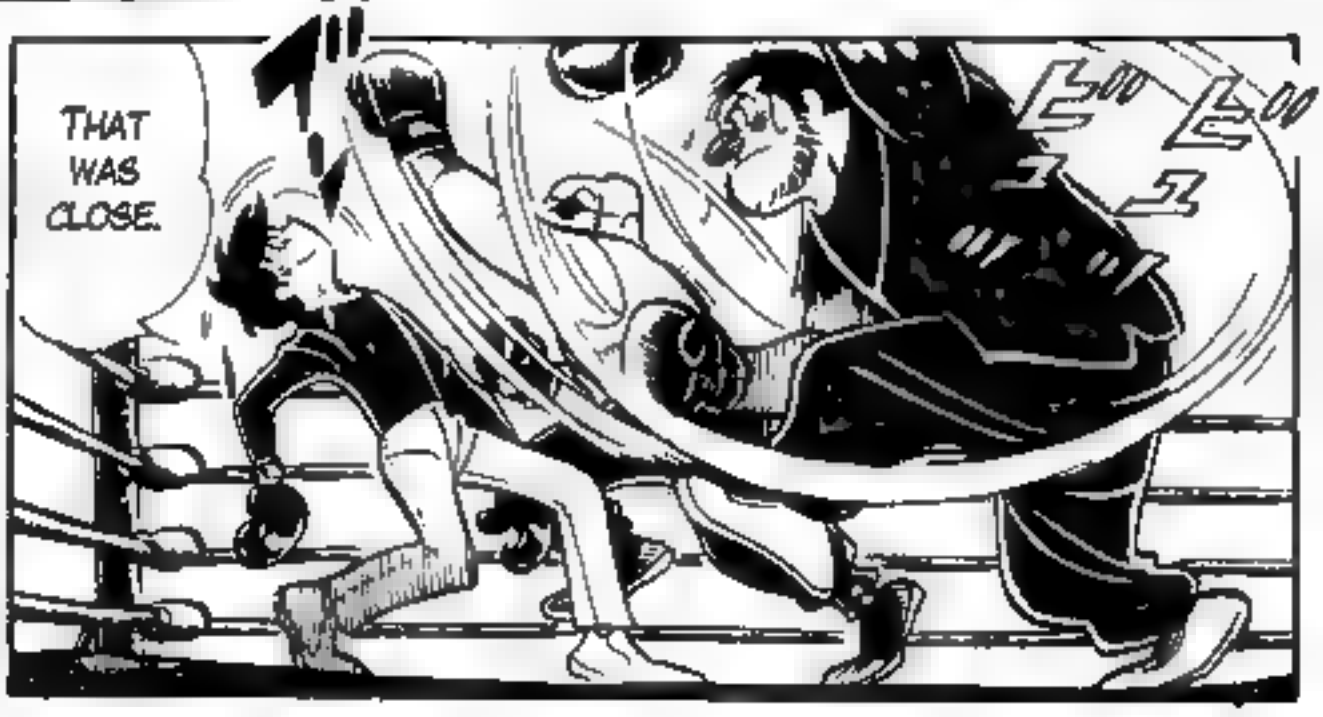
ATTACK AT ONCE...

HAVING THE TWO OF YOU...

WHOA...

IS CERTAINLY A LOT MORE INTENSE...

WHOA...


THAT WAS CLOSE.

OOF!

GO DUMP SOME WATER ON HIM, NISHI!

ON YOUR BACK ALREADY?

UGH...

AHHH!

WILL THIS REALLY BE ENOUGH...?

BUT I WONDER...

THIS IS TO FEND AGAINST RIKIISHI'S UPPERS.

NO-GUARD SWAY-BACK TRAINING...

WITH THIS ALONE ...?

WILL I REALLY BE ABLE TO WIN,

....

FOLLOW THROUGH WITH ENOUGH POWER TO SEND THE WHOLE SANDBAG FLYING AWAY!

DON'T JUST STOP AS SOON AS YOU MAKE IMPACT!

COME ON! RAISE YOUR LEGS UP HIGHER!

JAB! JAB, YOU IDIOT! YOU AIN'T GONNA HIT SQUAT WITH THOSE HUGE SWINGS OF YOURS!

TUCK YOUR CHIN IN MORE!

YOU THINK THIS IS A GAME OR SOMETHING!?

USE YOUR HEAD WHEN YOU'RE TRAINING!

CIRCLE AROUND! DO YOU NOT HAVE LEGS OR SOMETHING!?

I DON'T SEE RIKIISHI ANYWHERE...

HMM...

STOP TALKING AND FOCUS!

HEY YOU!

NO, NO.

CAN YOU TELL ME IF RIKIISHI'S TAKING A BREAK TODAY?

EXCUSE ME,

S-SORRY...

NOW GO OVER AND THERE KEEP TRAINING!

HE'S TRAINING IN THE PLAYER'S LOUNGE OVER THERE.

HE NEEDS TO TRAIN WITH THE HEATING TURNED WAY UP IN ORDER TO HELP HIM LOSE WEIGHT FOR THE MATCH SO IT MAKES SENSE HE'D BE TRAINING IN A ROOM ALL BY HIMSELF.

AH RIGHT.

SO IT'S BEHIND THIS DOOR, HUH.

I'M SORRY,

BUT NOBODY'S ALLOWED TO DISTURB RIKIISHI'S IN THE MIDDLE OF PRACTICE.

S B C

W-WAIT A MINUTE, MISTERS!

S B C

BUT...

IF YOU GUYS ALL GO IN, YOU'RE BOUND TO MAKE HIM LOSE FOCUS...

C'MON, JUST A LITTLE PEAK!

WE SWEAR WE WON'T DISTURB HIM!

WHAT?

DON'T TELL ME THIS IS RESTRICTED ACCESS STUFF LIKE WITH WOLF ALL OVER AGAIN...

MNN...

PRETTY PLEASE?

WE PROMISE WE WON'T TAKE ANY PHOTOS OR WRITE ANY ARTICLES ON THIS MATTER SO JUST LET US HAVE A LITTLE PEAK.

S B C

AH, I KNEW IT!

YOU GUYS ARE DOING SOME SORT OF SPECIAL TRAINING FOR THE UPCOMING SHOWDOWN WITH YABUKI JOE, RIGHT!?

N-NO, IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT...

IN FACT, YOU CAN GO INSIDE AND SEE FOR YOURSELVES.

HAHA... REALLY, WE'RE NOT DOING ANY SORT OF SPECIAL TRAINING AT ALL.

TO REFRAIN FROM MAKING ANY LOUD NOISES OR TAKING PHOTOS WITH THE FLASH ON.

HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU GENTLEMEN,

RIKIISHI'S NOT THE TYPE OF BOXER WHO'D LOSE HIS FOCUS JUST BECAUSE OF A FEW VISITORS.

IT'S FINE.

M-MISS...

SBC

...

はぁー

SO CAN YOU PROMISE?

HE SEEMS TO BE ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO BRIGHT LIGHTS.

RIKIISHI'S CURRENTLY IN THE MIDDLE OF A VERY HARSH WEIGHT-LOSS REGIMENT SO HE'S NOT QUITE AT FULL STRENGTH...

YES...

W-WELL, I GUESS IF THAT'S HOW IT IS THEN...

UMM...

WELL!? CAN YOU PROMISE OR NOT!?

SBC

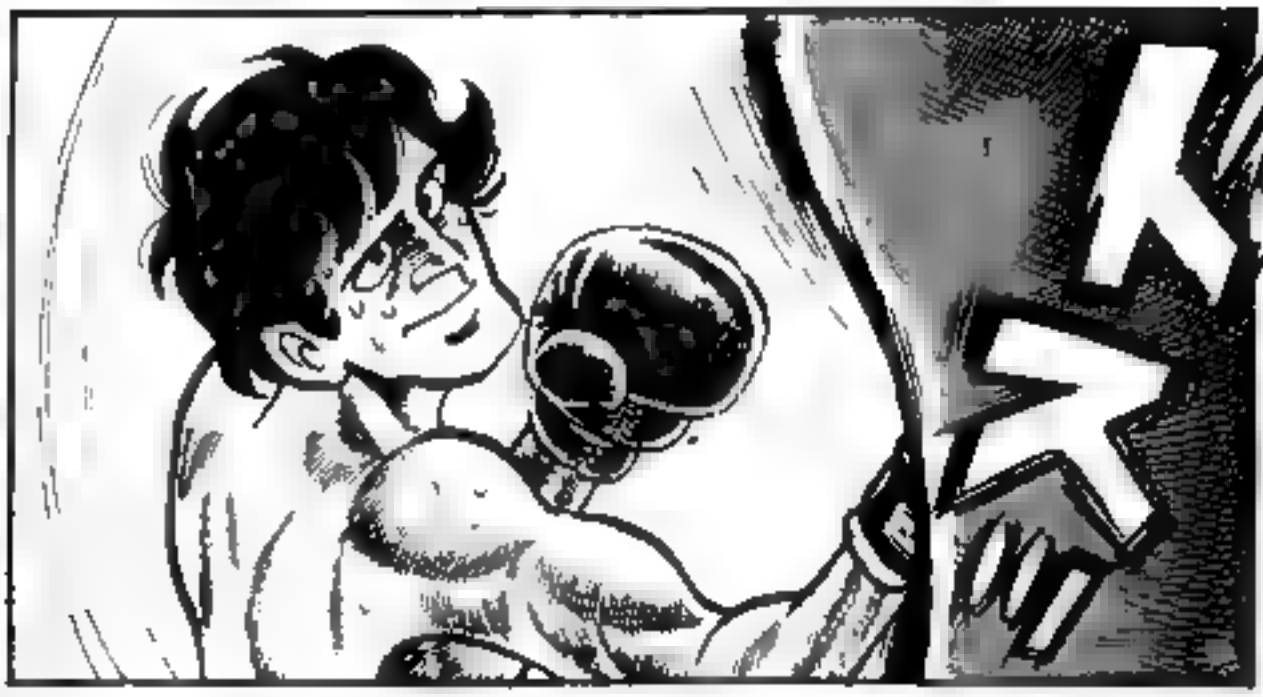
PARDON OUR INTRUSION...

YES, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

YOU MAY GO RIGHT IN THEN.

THANK YOU.

ガチャ!!



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ゴゴ…

NO, THAT'S OUR DOCTOR FOR SHIRAKI GYM.

COACH?

IS THAT MAN SITTING THERE... HIS, UMM...

MAY WE ASK HIM A QUESTION?

UMM...

OH...

SO HE HAS TO BE UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION BY THE DOCTOR WHENEVER HE'S TRAINING.

AS YOU CAN SEE, RIKIISHI'S WEIGHT-LOSS REGIMENT IS FAR MORE EXTREME THAN WHAT CAN NORMALLY BE TOLERATED BY A HUMAN BEING,

DOES HE JUST... KEEP ON HITTING THE SANDBAG UNTIL HE PASSES OUT FROM EXHAUSTION?

T-THEN...

OH...

BUT AS LONG AS HE'S HITTING THAT SANDBAG, I DOUBT HE'LL PAY ANY ATTENTION TO THE CONVERSATION AROUND HIM.

YOU CAN TRY, I SUPPOSE,

SURPRISINGLY, THE SOUND OF THE BELL ALONE IS ABLE TO REACH HIS EARS.

NO, WE RING A BELL WHEN THE DOCTOR DEEMS IT NECESSARY.

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Y-YEAH...

HE'S BEEN HITTING ONLY UPPERCUTS EVER SINCE WE ENTERED THE ROOM.

NOT ONLY THAT,

HE'S BEEN HITTING THE SAME SPOT OVER AND OVER AGAIN THAT THE WHOLE SANDBAG IS BENT OVER AT THAT PLACE...

LOOK.

ドカーン

ドカ

ABOUT THE SAME HEIGHT AS YABUKI JOE'S CHIN...?

IS IT JUST ME OR IS THAT SPOT ON THE SANDBAG HE'S HITTING REPEATEDLY..

GUYS...

ぞくっ……

YES?

ガヤ

MISS...

I SEE... VERY WELL THEN.

I'M AFRAID WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE HIM STOP FOR HERE TODAY.

ACCORDING TO THE SCHEDULE, HE WAS TO PRACTICE FOR 2 MORE ROUNDS-WORTH OF TIME BUT JUDGING BY HIS CURRENT CONDITION,

BUT I... I STILL HAVE 2 MORE ROUNDS TO...

COME ON THEN. YOU NEED TO TAKE A REST.

I KNOW, BUT THE DOCTOR SAYS PRACTICING ANY LONGER THAN THIS WILL ONLY HARM YOUR BODY...

RIKIISHI,

THAT'LL BE ENOUGH FOR TODAY. YOU DID VERY WELL.

はあ はあ

AH, THANK YOU, MISS...

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN HANDLE AN INTERVIEW RIGHT NOW?

OH THAT'S RIGHT. THE REPORTERS CAME TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING.

RIGHT...

YOU CAN ALWAYS PRACTICE SOME MORE TOMORROW.

IT MIGHT SEEM A LITTLE TOO SOON BUT TAKE A BREAK FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.

GO RIGHT AHEAD WITH THE QUESTIONS, GENTLEMEN.

I DON'T MIND.

YEAH...

PLEASE EXCUSE US THEN.

IS THAT SO?

W-WE'RE FINE, THANK YOU...

IT'S NOT ANYTHING URGENT...

N-NO... WE UHH... WELL...

GO WASH OFF WITH A HOT SHOWER,

AND MAKE SURE TO WEAR WARM CLOTHING RIGHT AFTER SO YOU DON'T GET SICK.

GET OUT OF THE WAY!

SBC

YES, DOCTOR.

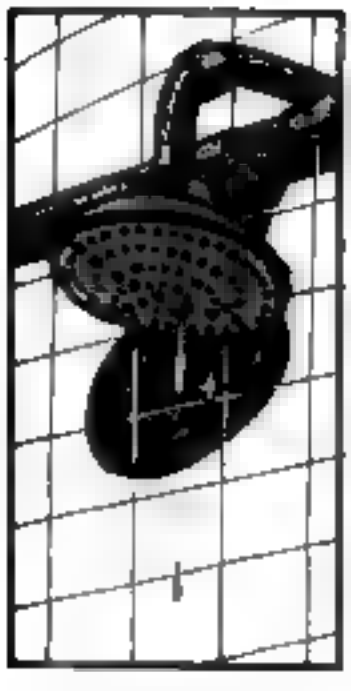
....
!!

I HAD THE COLDEST CHILL GO RIGHT DOWN MY SPINE...
WHEN I LOOKED AT HIM,

ME TOO...
I JUST SUDDENLY LOST THE WILL TO ASK ANYTHING WHEN I SAW THAT FACE OF HIS...
JEEZ...

...
...

GONNA BE IMPOSSIBLE TO WRITE AN ARTICLE WITHOUT AN INTERVIEW NOR A SINGLE PICTURE.
DAMN...
YOU SAID IT...



CAN'T GO BACK TO THE OFFICE COMPLETELY EMPTY-HANDED, RIGHT?
W-WAIT UP, WE'RE COMING TOO!

WHY DON'T WE AT LEAST GO ASK HIM HOW HE FEELS ABOUT THE UPCOMING MATCH?
AH, WAIT!

STORAGE ROOM?

WAIT NO... THE DOCTOR TOLD HIM TO TAKE A BREAK FOR THE REST OF THE DAY SO HE'S PROBABLY IN THE STORAGE ROOM DOWNSTAIRS.

THE MASSAGE ROOM, I THINK?

ALREADY?

RIKIISHI? HE ALREADY LEFT THE SHOWERS.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW?

THANKS FOR THE HELP!

IT SHOULD BE EASY ENOUGH TO FIND.

YEAH, IT'S IN THE BASEMENT. JUST TAKE THE STAIRCASE OVER THERE.

BEATS ME...

WHY'S RIKIISHI RESTING IN A STORAGE ROOM?

OVER THERE!

AH-

RIGHT.

IT'S YOUR TURN TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE KEYS TODAY

HERE YOU GO.

WHERE MIGHT RIKIISHI BE...?

AH, WELL...

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU STILL NEED?

BACK AGAIN?

SHIRAI

HE SPECIFICALLY ASKED US TO LOCK HIM IN LIKE THIS.

IT'S TO PREVENT HIM FROM COMING OUT WHEN HE BECOMES NEARLY DELIRIOUS FROM THIRST.

BUT UHH... WHAT'S WITH THE LOCK?

INSIDE THIS ROOM.

WE'LL BE QUICK...

O-OK,

HE'S VERY TIRED AND NEEDS REST.

I HAVE TO ASK YOU SIRS TO ONLY TAKE A FEW MINUTES OF HIS TIME.

IF IT'S AN INTERVIEW YOU WANT, YOU CAN ASK HIM THROUGH THE SLIT RIGHT HERE.

SHIRAI

I WANT TO SEE TOO.

LET ME SEE...

THERE'S JUST NO WAY I CAN EVEN TALK TO HIM WHEN HE LOOKS LIKE THAT...

GULP!

I THINK I'M GONNA THROW UP...

THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE'S PUSHING HIMSELF IS JUST INSANE.

I KNOW HE'S GOT A DOCTOR BY HIM AT ALL TIMES AND ALL BUT...

THAT SHIRAKI GYM'S STARTING TO LOOK MORE AND MORE LIKE A MENTAL WARD THAN A BOXING GYM TO ME...

YOU SAID IT...

WELL IT AIN'T JUST RIKIISHI. THAT DOCTOR AND THAT GIRL ARE ALL OUT OF THEIR MINDS!

MAYBE RIKIISHI HAS GONE INSANE...?

WHO KNOWS..

下釜闘クラブ

Crush Rikiishi!

Get'im Joe!

Go go

HAVE ANOTHER DRINK!

WILL DO!

You can do it Joe!

WHOA!

BOXING CLUB

IS YABUKI JOE TRAINING RIGHT NOW?

HELLO THERE.

LONG TIME NO SEE.

HEY LOOK, IT'S THOSE REPORTERS AGAIN.

FANGE BOXING CLUB

WHADDYA SAY WE DRINK TO JOE'S UPCOMING VICTORY?

AND HE'S AS ENERGETIC AS EVER!

YOU BET!

S-SORRY, I'M TECHNICALLY STILL AT WORK...

UHH, SORRY BUT...

MIND IF I TAKE A LOOK?

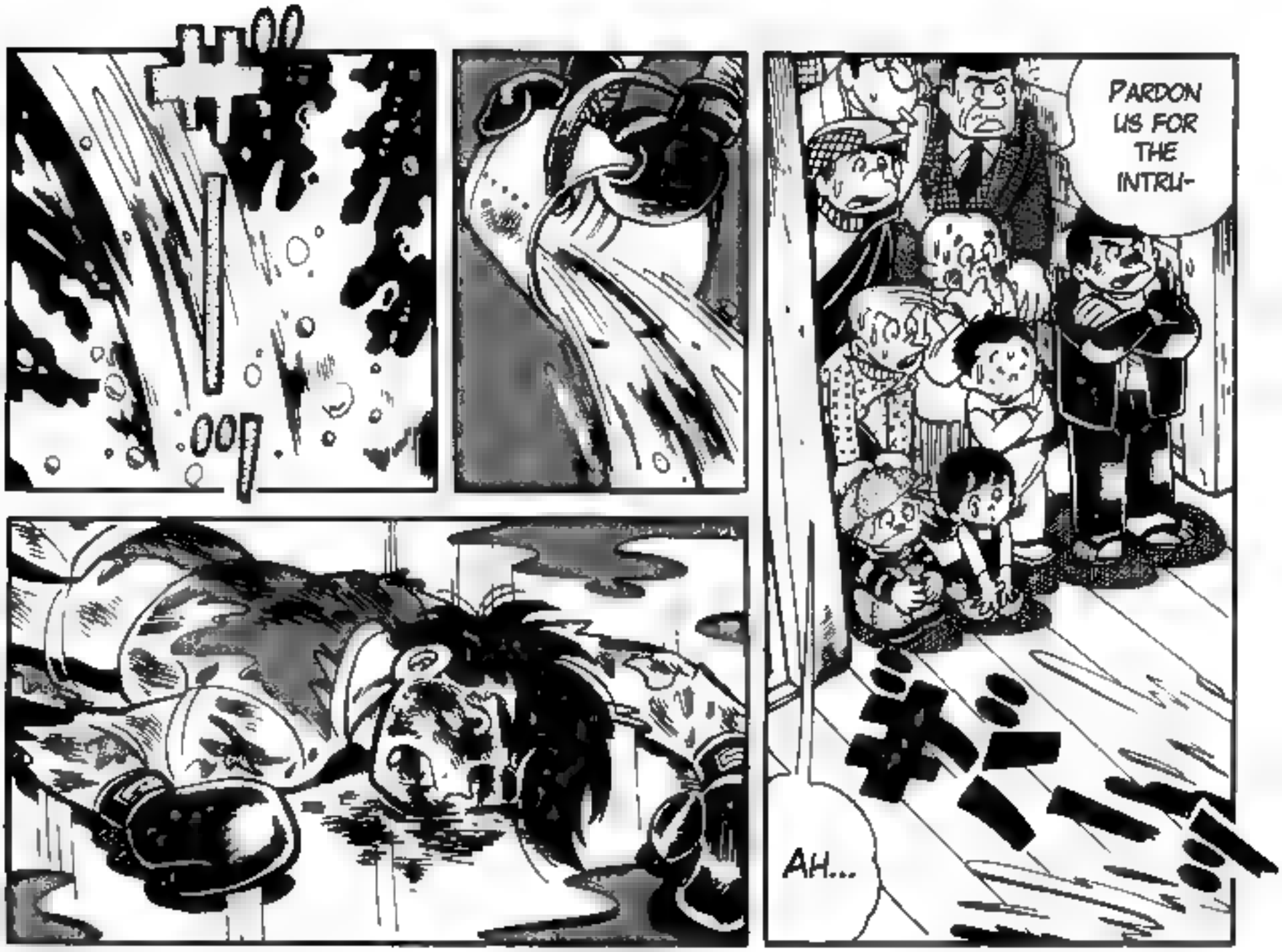
NICE CAMERA YOU GOT THERE, BUB.

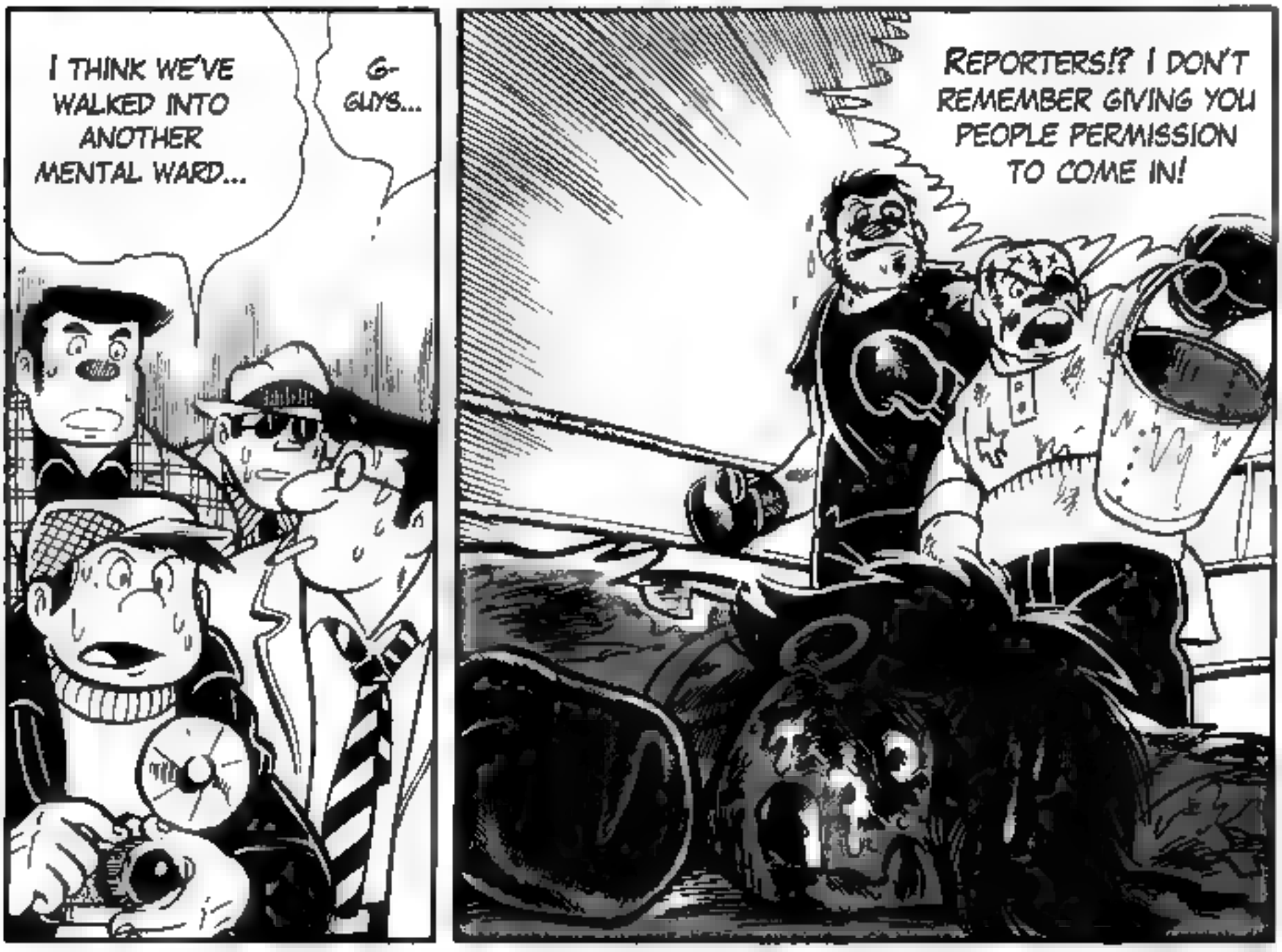
COULD YOU SCOOT OVER A LITTLE, KIDS?

NOT SURPRISING SINCE THE FOLKS HERE CONSIDER JOE AS AN UNDEFEATED BOXING KING.

THESE PEOPLE SEEM LIKE THEY'RE ALREADY CELEBRATING.

HAHA, THE ATMOSPHERE HERE IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM SHIRAKI GYM.


PARDON US FOR THE INTRU-
AH...


I THINK WE'VE WALKED INTO ANOTHER MENTAL WARD...
G-GUYS...
REPORTERS!? I DON'T REMEMBER GIVING YOU PEOPLE PERMISSION TO COME IN!

GET THE HELL OUTTA MY GYM!

WHO THE HELL SAID YOU COULD JUST BARGE INSIDE!?

GET OUT THIS INSTANT!

AGH...!

OOF...

ジョーちゃんがんばれ

NGHH...

WE'RE SORRY.

PLEASE DON'T GET SO ANGRY,

S-SORRY, KID...

GODDAMN IT!

OH, THANKS A LOT, IDIOTS! IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU THAT WE ALL GOT KICKED OUT TOO!

THE TANGE GYM'S FAMOUS FOR ITS BLOODY TRAINING BEFORE EVERY MATCH!

WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU NUMBSKULLS TALKIN' ABOUT NOW!?

DO YOU KNOW IF THEY'RE ALWAYS PRACTICING THAT VIOLENTLY THESE DAYS...?

BUT UHH...

RIKIISHI'S ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL THAN ANY BOXER JOE'S FACED UP 'TIL NOW!

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, DO YA!?

DON'T YOU THINK THIS IS A LITTLE TOO MUCH, EVEN FOR THEM...?

CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ALL PISSING YOUR PANTS OVER THIS MUCH! ARE YOU PEOPLE REALLY NEWSPAPER REPORTERS!?

WE DID HEAR THEIR PRACTICES WERE... A BIT ON THE ROUGH SIDE BUT...

WELL...

DUH! ISN'T THAT OBVIOUS!?

THAT'S WHY TANGE GYM'S GOTTA STEP IT UP TO ANOTHER LEVEL TOO IF THEY'RE SERIOUS ABOUT WINNING!

ナラナラ

HEE HEE, I TOLD THEM OFF TOO.

JESUS...

ARE YOU IDIOTS REALLY REPORTERS FOR THEM PAPERS OR NOT!?

ACK!

I WANNA SEE TOO, MOVE IT.

LET ME SEE.

HEY, WE CAN PEEK INSIDE FROM HERE.

THE REPORTERS ARE TRYING TO SECRETLY PEEK IN ON YOUR TRAINING!

AHHH! MR. DANPEI!

COME ON NOW, KIDS. IT'S NOT AS IF WE'RE SPIES OR ANYTHING.

THIS IS WORK FOR US SO WOULD YOU PLEASE JUST TURN A BLIND EYE ON US, JUST THIS ONE TIME AT LEAST...?

リ～ リ～ リ～

O-OH...

YOU THINK WE'RE DUMB OR SOMETHING!? WHY SHOULD WE TURN A BLIND EYE FOR FREE!?

HUH?

FOR FREE!?

TURN A BLIND EYE?

RIGHT...

WHY DON'T WE GO EASY ON THEM JUST THIS ONCE?

WELL, THEY ARE JUST TRYIN' TO DO THEIR JOBS AND ALL...

F-FINE, FINE...

カチャ カチャ

THIS MAY NOT BE MUCH BUT WHY DON'T YOU KIDS GO BUY YOURSELVES A NICE SNACK?

O-OK, WE PROMISE WE WON'T WRITE ANYTHING BAD...

WE'LL SCRATCH, BITE, AND KICK THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS OUTTA YOU!

DON'T YOU DARE THINK YOU CAN JUST GET AWAY WITH WRITING A BAD ARTICLE ON OUR JOE!

BUT REMEMBER THIS!

WHEW...

THE REPORTERS ARE TRYING TO SECRETLY PEEK IN ON YOUR TRAINING!

AHHH! MR. DANPEI!

DON'T BE STUPID. WE'RE GONNA GO TO THAT FANCY RESTAURANT AND GET SOME SPAGHETTI!

HEH HEH, LET'S GO GET SOME ODEN WITH THAT MONEY!

....

NO, LET'S GO GET MEAT DUMPLINGS INSTEAD!

FINE, FINE, WE GET THE MESSAGE ALREADY.

SSHHHH!

OHHH, MISTER DANPEIIIIIII!

YOU IDIOT, LET'S GO TO AN ACTUAL BAR AND GET SOME BEER!

WHO'S UP FOR SOME SAKE!?

THIS WHOLE TOWN'S NOTHING BUT TROUBLE... YOU GUYS OWE ME FOR COVERING FOR ALL OF US!

RIGHT!

WHY DON'T WE GO EASY ON THEM JUST THIS ONCE?

WELL, THEY ARE JUST TRYIN' TO DO THEIR JOBS AND ALL...

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

PANT
PANT

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE REACHED YOUR LIMIT...

ガラン
ガラン

JOE...

KEEP GOING!

WHEN DID I SAY I WANTED TO STOP!?

THAT'LL DO FOR TODAY.

ALRIGHT,

STOP WHINING! IT'S FINE AS LONG AS THE MAN HIMSELF GIVES CONSENT!

I CAN'T KEEP ON PUNCHING YOU WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY A BLOODY PULP...

I CAN'T...

GIVE US A BREAK TOO, JOE...

JUST WHAT EXACTLY IS HE TRYING TO GET THE HANG OF...?

WHAT?

I'M SO CLOSE TO GETTING THE HANG OF IT!

HIT ME WITH EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT!

SO C'MON!

LET'S DO THIS!

FINE.

GOOD!

THAT'S WHAT I WANT!

TIRED ALREADY!?

WHAT'S WITH THOSE LUKEWARM PUNCHES OF YOURS!?

THEY'RE SPARRING 2 ON 1 AGAINST JOE...

L-LOOK...

GLAD TO SEE YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH ENERGY TO KEEP ON TALKING...

HA,

はあ はあ

YAHHH!

SINCE AN UPPERCUT IS AS POWERFUL AS IT IS TIRING.

GUESS IT'S NOT TOO SURPRISING,

IT'S BOUND TO BE TWICE AS TIRING AS A NORMAL PUNCH!

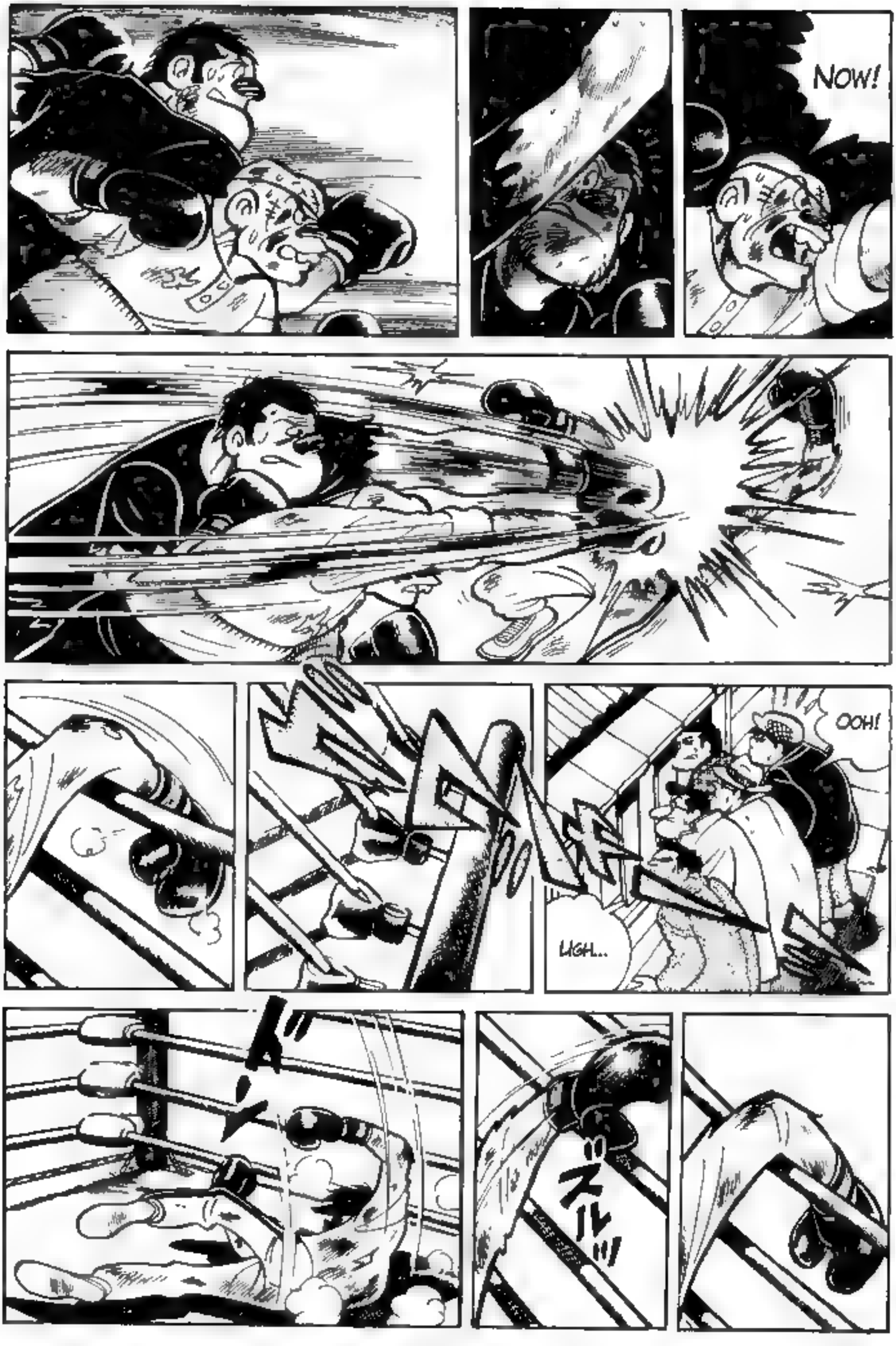
WITH ALL THE SWINGING YOU'RE DOING,

GOOD.

I WON'T LEARN UNLESS IT'S A SINK OR SWIM SITUATION...

O-OK...

COME ON NISHI! LET'S HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT!


NOW!
OOH!
UGH...

ゴォ

JUST A LITTLE... LITTLE MORE...

JUST A LITTLE MORE...
SO CLOSE TO GETTING IT...
I'M SO CLOSE...

I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE...

YOU WILL,

KEEP HITTING ME RIGHT HERE AND NOW...

UNLESS YOU WANT TO SEE RIKIISHI TURNING ME INTO A BLOODY PULP OUT ON THE RING,

NISHI...

AT THIS RATE, YOU'LL BE CRIPPLED BEFORE YOUR FIGHT...

THIS IS JUST CRAZY.

NISHI!

SO COME ON...

. . . .

YEAH...

READY, JOE?

THEY'RE ALL INSANE...

AH!

WHOA!

AH!

NOW!

AH-

LOOKS LIKE THIS IS THE DEFENSIVE TACTIC THEY CAME UP WITH AFTER WATCHING THE RIKIISHI-PANCHO FIGHT

THEY'RE COMING AFTER HIM WITH UP-PERCUTS AND THEN SUDDENLY SWITCHING OVER TO A STRAIGHT...

IT'S BECAUSE MY BODY'S NOT DOING AS I WANT THAT I'M GOING TO THESE LENGTHS TO CONTROL IT...

YEAH, I KNOW...

COME AT ME ONE MORE TIME JUST LIKE NOW!

GIVE ME ONE MORE PUNCH INSTEAD.

IF YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH TIME TO LECTURE ME ON USELESS THINGS,

IF YOU LET YOUR BODY GET USED TO JUST THE UPPERCUTS,

HAVE YOU REALIZED IT YET?

YOUR BODY WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE AS YOU WANT WHEN THE ATTACK SUDDENLY CHANGES TO A STRAIGHT. THAT'S JUST HOW THE HUMAN BODY WORKS.

LET'S GO...

YEAH, ME TOO...

I FEEL LIKE I'M GONNA THROW UP AGAIN...

I.. I'VE HAD ENOUGH FOR TODAY...

AGHHHH!

I HAVE NO CLUE...

WHICH ONE DO YOU THINK WILL WIN...?

I WONDER IF THOSE TWO WILL BE EVEN ABLE TO STAND UP ON THE RING ON THE DAY OF THE MATCH...

IT'S A FIGHT TO THE DEATH BETWEEN TWO LUNATICS.

AS I SAID BEFORE, THIS AIN'T NO FIGHT BETWEEN BOXERS.

ONE LOCKS HIMSELF UP IN A BASEMENT STORAGE ROOM WHILE HIS BODY SHRIVELS UP INTO A MUMMY,

RIKIISHI TOORU AND YABUKI JOE...

WHILE THE OTHER LETS HIMSELF GET BEATEN TO A PULP OF SWEAT AND BLOOD...

IT MIGHT BE MORE THAN LIKELY THAT BOTH OF THEM WILL LOSE...

WHO KNOWS...

N-NOW, LET'S JUST CALM DOWN FIRST...

I SAID OPEN UP!

O-OPEN UP...

ONE CERTAIN NIGHT, RIKIISHI FINALLY REACHED HIS LIMITS...

NO MATTER WHAT HIS FELLOW CLUB MEMBERS SAID, IT WAS FUTILE.

WATER...

I NEED...

OPEN THE DOOR.

R-RIKIISHI...

I GUESS WE SHOULD OPEN IT THEN..

HE'S BANGING HIS WHOLE BODY AGAINST THE STEEL DOOR...!

AT THIS RATE, HE MIGHT SERIOUSLY INJURE HIMSELF BEFORE THE MATCH...!

UGH...!

PANT

PANT

AGH!

I'M SICK AND TIRED OF ALL THIS!

I NEED WATER!

WATER...

O-OH NO! ALERT MS. SHIRAKI RIGHT AWAY!

WHERE...

WA... TER..

はあ はあ はあ はあ

WAAATER!

WATER!

WATER...

AH!

NGHHH!

W-WHO THE HELL DID THIS!?

WHAT THE...

AH-

FINE! THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF OTHER FAUCETS!

E-EVEN THE SHOWERS ...!?

AHH!

THIS ONE TOO...

AHH...

I FIGURED THINGS WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THIS EVENTUALLY...

I'M SORRY. IT WAS ME.

コポ コポ…

PLEASE DRINK UP.

SO INSTEAD, I HAVE WARM WATER FOR YOU HERE.

…

BUT YOU KNOW, THE DOCTOR SAID DRINKING COLD WATER SUDDENLY WHEN YOUR BODY'S SEVERELY DEHYDRATED CAN BE DETRIMENTAL...

I WOULD NEVER THINK ANY LESS OF YOU FOR GIVING UP YOUR WEIGHT LOSS REGIMENT...

RIKIISHI,

ﾌﾋｯ…

…

AND PLEASE RETURN TO THE RIKIISHI I ONCE KNEW!

DRINK THIS GLASS,

SO PLEASE DRINK.

I'D BE HAPPY TO SEE THAT EVEN THE INVINCIBLE RIKIISHI IS STILL JUST A HUMAN WITH HUMAN FLAWS.

IN FACT, IT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE.

THEN I'LL CONVINCE MY GRANDFATHER TO FIND SOME WAY AROUND IT AND ALLOW THE MATCH TO PROCEED NO MATTER WHAT.

IF THIS SINGLE GLASS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR FAILING TO QUALIFY THE WEIGHT RESTRICTION,

NO NEED TO WORRY. IT'S NOT AS IF YOU'LL REGAIN ALL YOUR WEIGHT JUST BY DRINKING A SINGLE GLASS.

ゴクリ

ONLY BREAK?

BUT I'LL LET YOUR KINDNESS BE THE ONLY BREAK FOR ME TONIGHT...

T-THANK YOU, MISS...

AHH!

AH!

SBC

ガ

BUT I'M FINE NOW...

EVEN THOUGH THE MATCH IS ALMOST HERE...

SO CLOSE TO BREAKING DOWN COMPLE-TELY.

I WAS SO CLOSE...

RIKIISHI!

SBC

BUT YOUR TEARS REALLY DID GIVE ME THE LAST BIT OF DETERMINATION I NEEDED.

TAKE IT AS DRAMATIC FLUFF IF YOU WANT,

I'LL DEMONSTRATE TO YOU THAT I CAN STILL PUT UP AN EXCELLENT FIGHT, EVEN WITH THIS WITHERED BODY.

I REALLY AM FINE.

YOU WON'T NEED TO LOCK THE DOORS FROM NOW ON.

SB

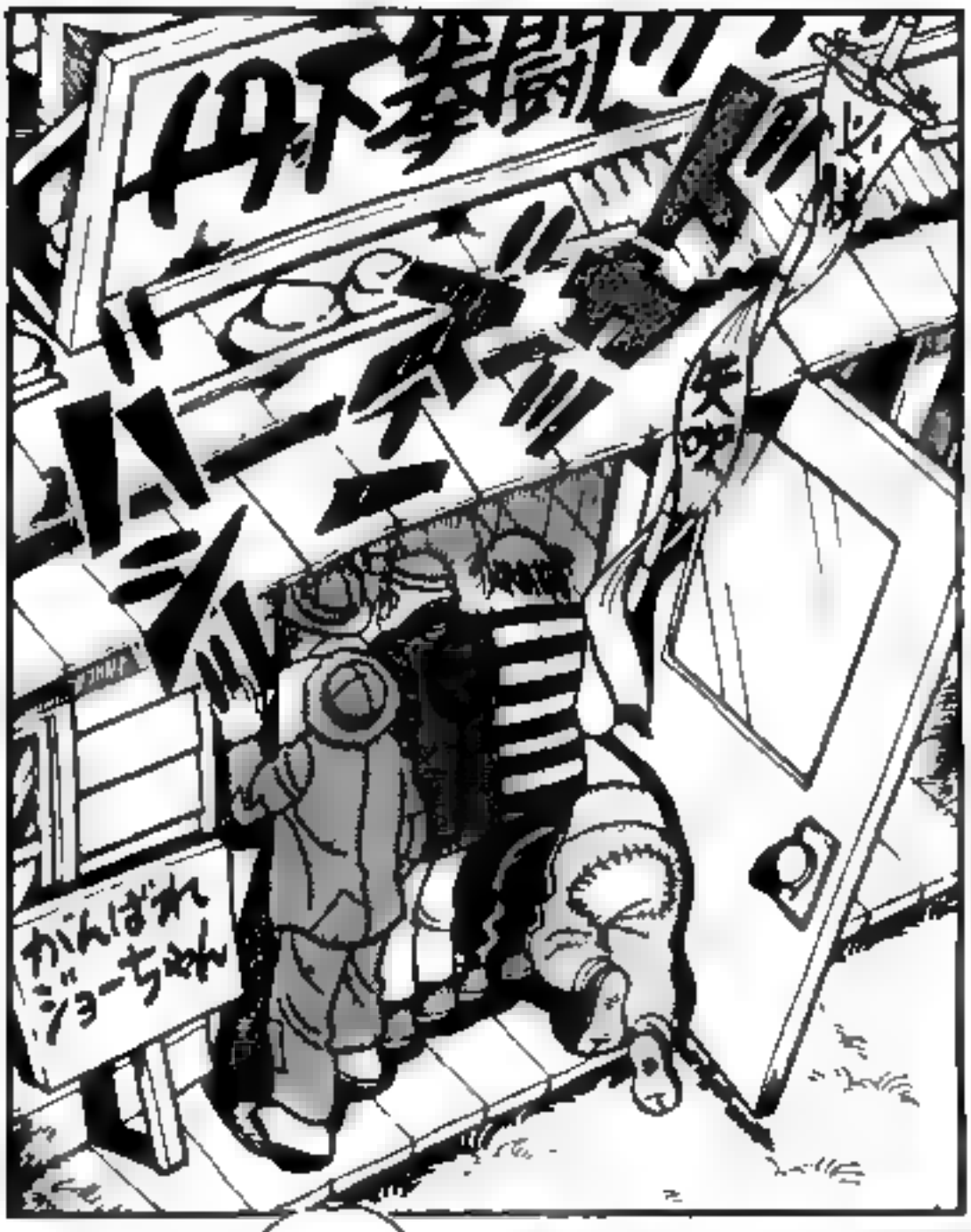
RIKIISHI, WAIT!

THANK YOU AGAIN, MISS...

RIKIISHI!

GOOD-NIGHT, MISS.

I BELIEVE I'LL NOW BE ABLE TO GET MY FIRST GOOD SLEEP IN AGES.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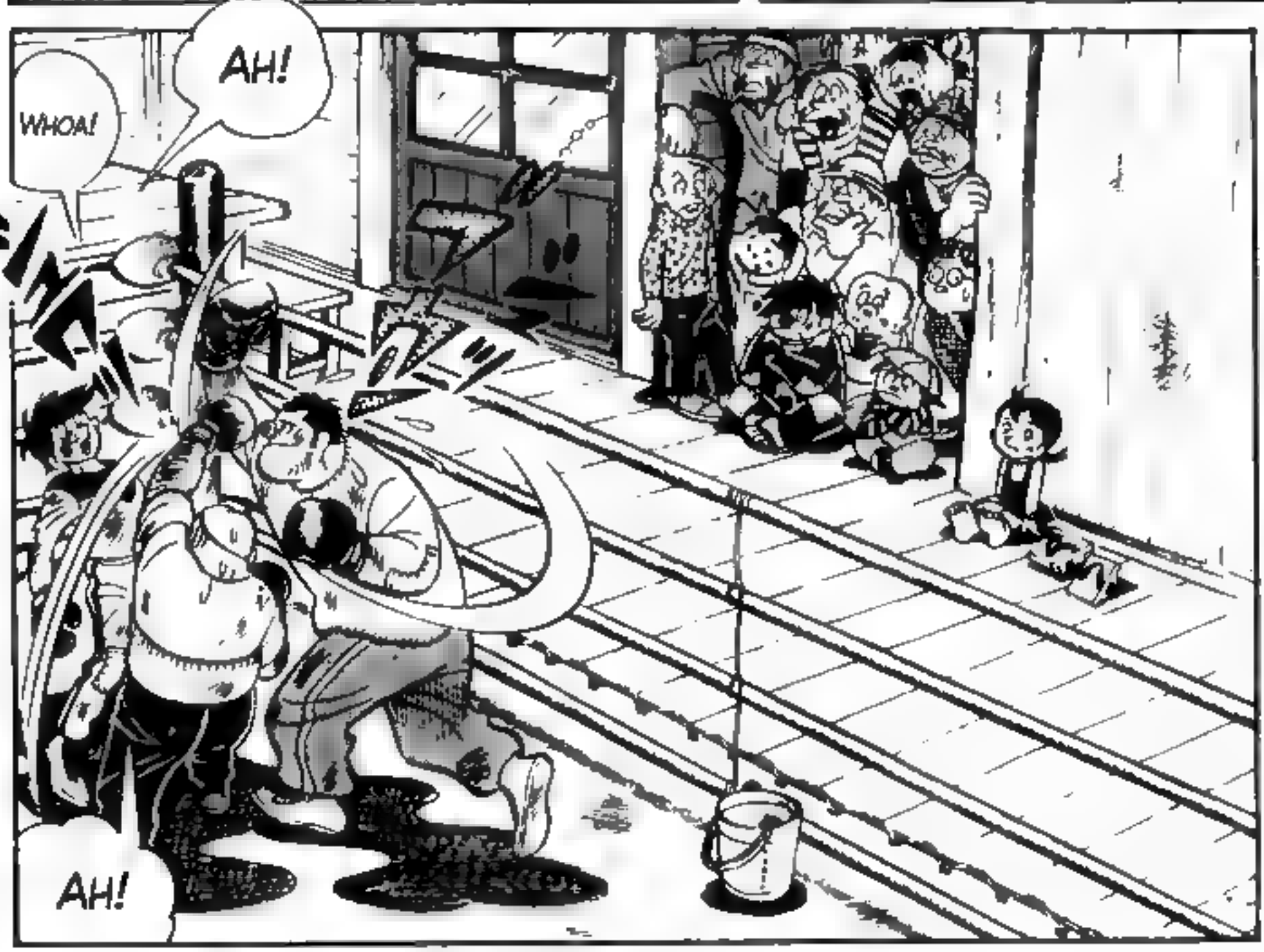

AH!
WHOA!
AH!

HUFF...

HUFF...

PANT

PANT

HUFF

HUFF

NGH...

I CAN STILL KEEP ON GOING...

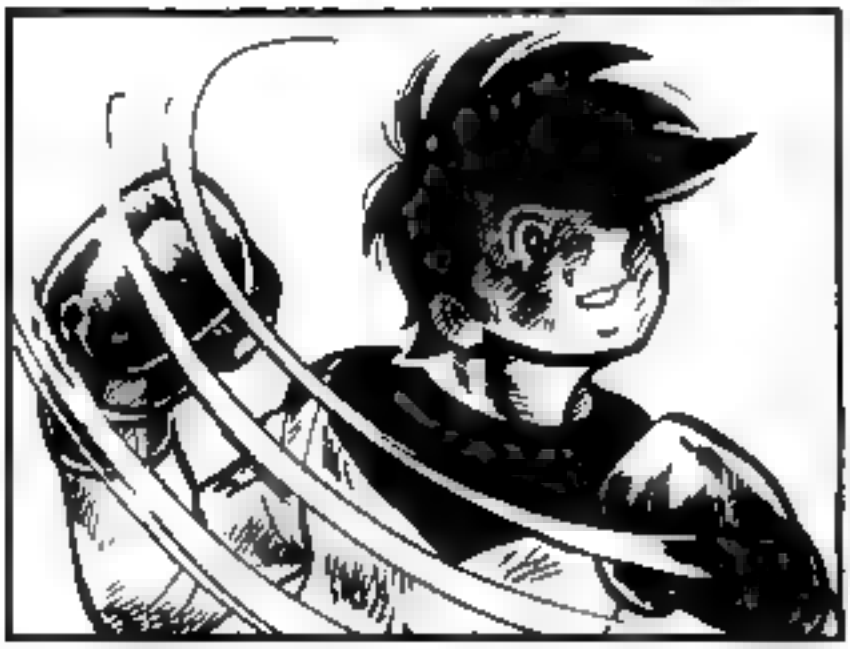
C... C'MON, GET THOSE ARMS UP AGAIN...

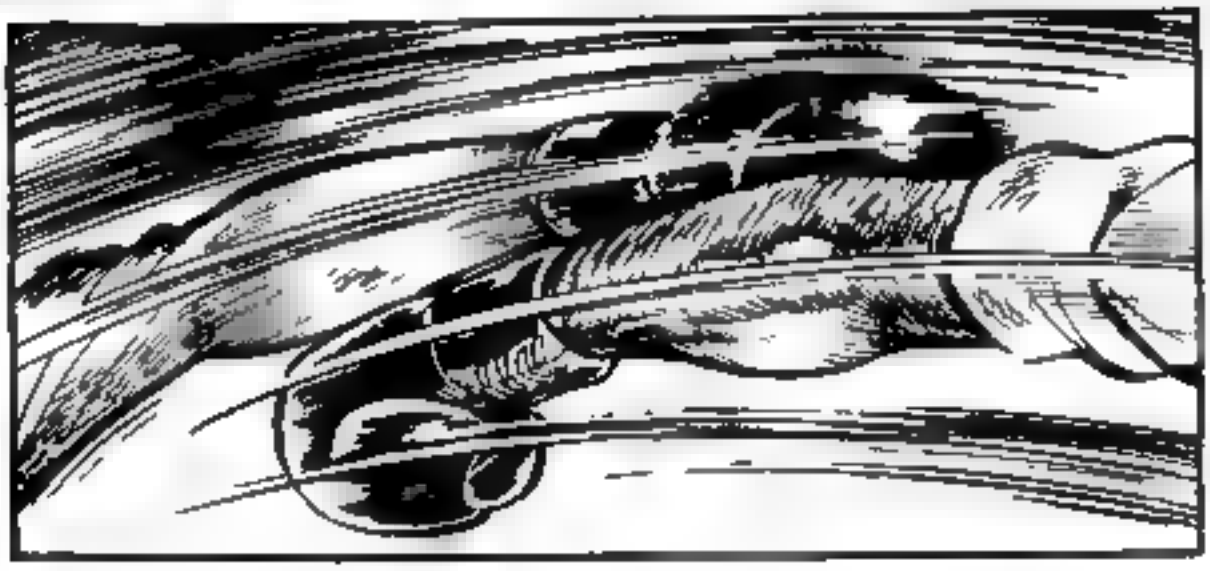
YAHH!

HAH!

WHOA!

AH!





NRRRRGHHHHH...

AHHHH...

WHOA...

AH-

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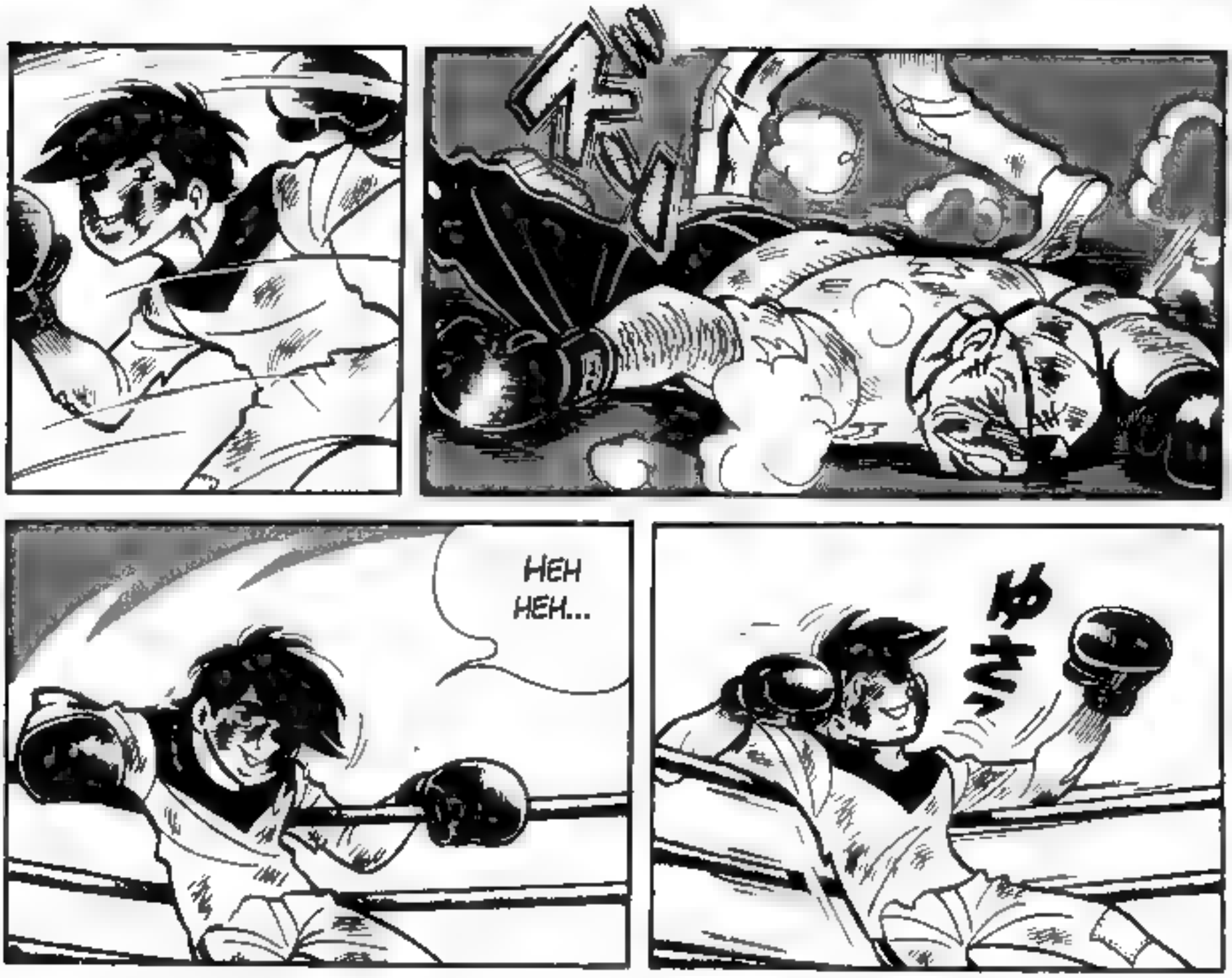
MNF...

ズルッ

J-JOE...

OLD MAN...


HEH
HEH...
HANG IN
THERE,
OLD MAN!
A-ARE
YOU
ALRIGHT!?
HAHA...
HA...

GO BRING SOME MEDICINE.

DON'T JUST SPACE OUT THERE,

THANKS.

HERE YOU GO.

THAT ONE! IT'S THE ONE BESIDE THE GLOVES!

MOVE OVER. HERE, HAVE SOME OF THIS.

HAHA, FINALLY UP, ARE YOU NOW?

MNN...

UGH...

I CAN NOW DODGE ALL OF THOSE AND EVEN TIME A CROSS COUNTER FOR THE FINAL BLOW!

A SUDDEN STRAIGHT AFTER CONSECUTIVE UPPERCUTS!

NOW EVEN RIKIISHI'S UPPERCUT STRATEGY WON'T BE ENOUGH TO BEAT YOU.

YES...

EXACTLY, HAHA...

YOU...

YOU FINALLY DID IT, JOE...

I SURE DID!

WITH A SPECTACULAR CROSS-COUNTER, JOE HAD FINALLY GRADUATED FROM THE 2 ON 1 SPARRING MEANT TO SIMULATE RIKIISHI'S UPPERCUT STRATEGY.

AND IT WAS NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON, AS THE FATED FIGHT WAS JUST A DAY AWAY.

THE TWO WOULD FINALLY MEET.

AT LAST, IT WAS THE DAY OF THE MATCH

BACK AWAY! USE YOUR FEET TO MAINTAIN THE PROPER DISTANCE!

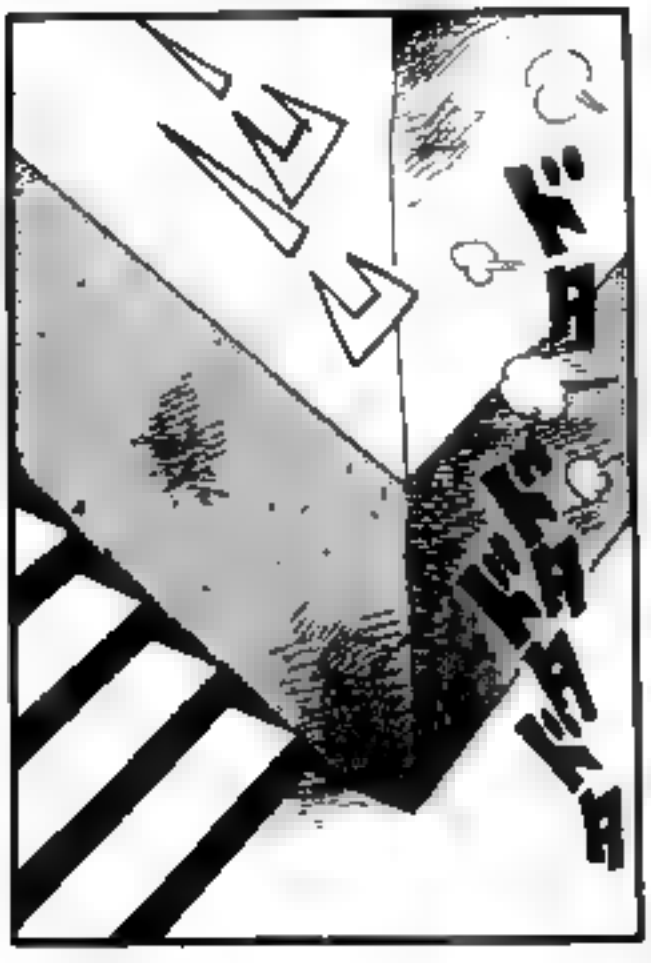
COME ON! KILL 'IM!

IN FRONT OF KOURAKUEN HALL'S SELLOUT CROWD.

YOU IDIOT! WHAT KIND OF RETARD PUNCHES WITH HIS EYES CLOSED!? WAKE UP OUT THERE!

YEAH! RIGHT THERE!

BODY BLOW! KEEP HITTIN' THE STOMACH!



HAH!

ALRIGHT, HERE COMES ANOTHER ONE!

WHOA, IT'S FLYIN', IT'S FLYIN'!

I CALL THIS ONE SO DON'T TOUCH IT!

THIS ONE'S MINE! I'LL KICK YOUR BUTT IF YOU ACCIDENTALLY STEP ON IT!

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THIS HALLWAY IS RESTRICTED ACCESS FOR PLAYERS AND STAFF ONLY!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU KIDS YELLING IN HERE FOR!?

NUH UH, I CALLED IT FIRST!

JOE! JOE! MAKE ONE FOR ME NEXT!

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT. I'LL FOLD A REAL GOOD ONE FOR YOU, SACHI.

JUST WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!?

THAT'S ENOUGH!

NOW GET YOUR ASS ON THAT TABLE SO I CAN GIVE YOU YOUR MASSAGE.

STOP SPEWING NONSENSE, YOU DUMBASS.

MY SHOULDERS AREN'T STIFF AT ALL.

OH GIMME A BREAK. I AIN'T NO SENIOR LIKE YOU. WHY DO I NEED A MASSAGE?

HMPH...

MY BODY'S IN GOOD SHAPE AND MY MUSCLES DON'T JUST STIFFEN UP BEFORE A MATCH UNLIKE AN AMATEUR'S!

THAT'S WHY I'M TELLING YOU MY MUSCLES ARE ALREADY RELAXED!

YOUR MUSCLES NEED TO BE RELAXED BEFORE A MATCH!

I'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR BODY LOOK AS STIFF AS HOW YOU ARE RIGHT NOW!

IN ALL MY TIMES I'VE ATTENDED TO YOU BEFORE MATCHES,

....

WHY DON'T YOU TOUCH THEM TO SEE FOR YOURSELF.

STOP BRAGGING.

JOE...WHAT ABOUT MY PLANE...?

YOUR ENTIRE BODY LOOKS DAMN STIFF TO ME.

HMPH...

GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE, YOU NOISY LITTLE BUGGERS!

LIE DOWN ALREADY!
WASTING ALL YOUR TIME WITH THOSE BRATS...
SCARED ABOUT RIKIISHI'S PUNCHES OR SOMETHING?
WHAT'RE YOU SO NERVOUS ABOUT?
HMM, YOU'RE EVEN STIFFER THAN I THOUGHT.
WHAT'S PROBABLY GOTTEN YOUR BODY ALL TENSED UP,
IN ANY CASE,
YEAH, YEAH, CALM DOWN.
I AIN'T NEVER BEEN SCARED!
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
INSTINCT CAN BE A SCARY THING.
THAT WILD ANIMAL-LIKE INSTINCT OF YOURS.
IS MOST LIKELY,

Ok...

Nishi, go get the gloves and bandages.

It can even accurately predict the future at times...

Stop trying to tiptoe around things and come out with it already.

...just what is it you want to say?

....Yeah, I saw him.

I'm sure you saw Rikiishi.

During the weight recording,

Back at noon,

But unlike the time when he fought Pancho Leo, his skin doesn't look all dark and withered up.

Right, it's exactly as you say...

And staring back at me with cold, sunken-in eyes.

He was as thin as ever,

RIGHT?

IS SEEING THAT NEW RIKIISHI...

WHAT'S GOTTEN YOUR BODY ALL TENSED UP,

THE SAME GOES FOR THE FLUSH OF HIS FACE.

THE COMPLEXION OF HIS SKIN LOOKED MUCH HEALTHIER.

I'LL LEAVE THE REST TO YOU, NISHI.

IT'S ALMOST TIME.

!!

ALRIGHT, GET UP..

WHAT'S WITH ME TODAY...

...

HUH? O-OH RIGHT.

CAN YOU UNCLENCH YOUR FIST FOR A SECOND?

JOE,

IT WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE...

BUT THAT FACE OF HIS...

HE WAS THE SAME 118 POUNDS AS LAST TIME, JUST BARELY QUALIFYING UNDER BANTAMWEIGHT LIMITS...

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HIS BODY'S NOW EVEN GOTTEN USED TO HELL ITSELF.

IT MUST'VE BEEN REAL HELL FOR HIM TO LOSE ALL THAT WEIGHT,

IT CAN ADJUST TO EVEN THE HARSHEST EXTREMES.

THE HUMAN BODY'S A MYSTERIOUS THING.

WHAT'S FOR CERTAIN IS THAT RIKIISHI'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM HOW HE WAS WHEN HE FOUGHT PANCHO.

IN ANY CASE,

MOST BOXERS WOULD'VE LONG GIVEN UP SUCH A HARSH WEIGHT LOSS REGIMENT.

CAN'T EXACTLY GO BRAGGING ABOUT HOW I BEAT UP AN OLD, DRIED-UP BAG OF BONES NOW, RIGHT?

JUST AS I WANTED.

HA HA...

ドカドカドカドカ

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE DONE.

AND THE MATCH HAS ENDED 1 MINUTE AND 58 SECONDS INTO THE 5TH ROUND. IT'S A KO-WIN FOR YOSHIZAWA!

HAHA, DID YA SEE THAT BEAUTIFUL COUNTER I GAVE HIM!?

YEAH! YOU GAVE HIM ONE HELL OF A PUNCH, ALRIGHT!

DON'T GET COCKY NOW. YOU SCREWED UP SO MANY TIMES IN THE EARLIER ROUNDS YOU HAD US SWEATING BUCKETS!

OK...

NISHI, DON'T FORGET THE OINTMENTS AND THE TOWEL.

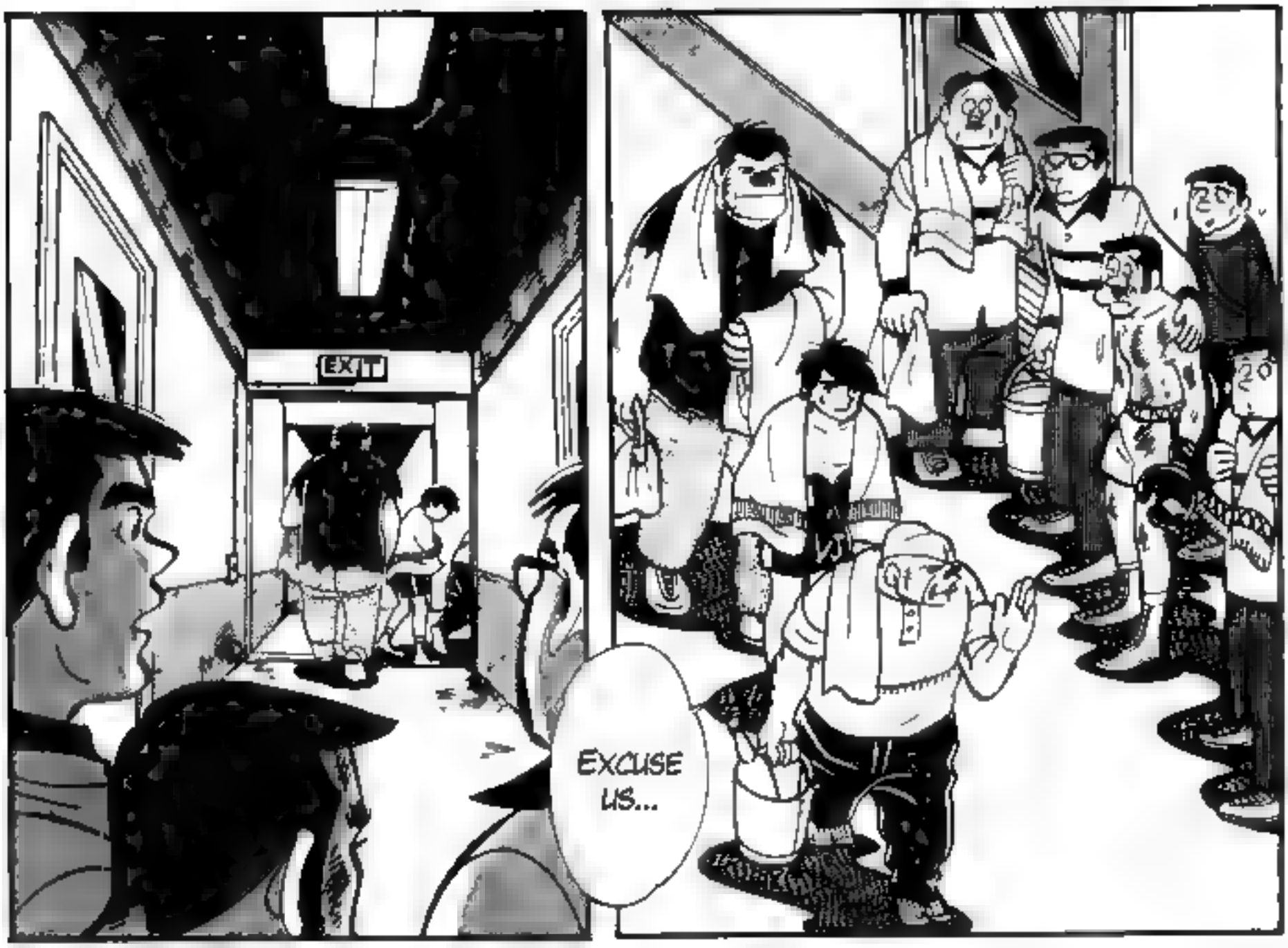
ALRIGHT, WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE.

PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE RING.

MR. YABUKI?

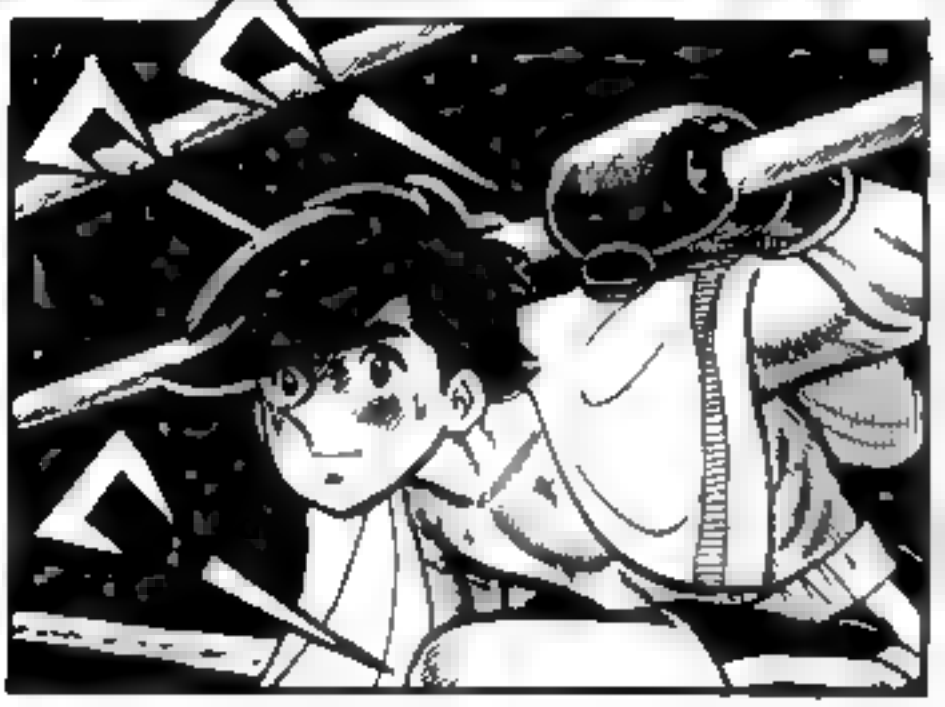
HAHAHA, YOU'RE A REAL-

YEAH WELL, IF IT WEREN'T FOR THOSE MISTAKES, I WOULD'VE DONE HIM IN WITHIN 3 ROUNDS!


EXIT
EXCUSE US...
IT'S RIKIISHI VS. YABUKI!
HURRY UP!
WE CAN'T MISS THE NEXT MATCH!
OH CRAP! LET'S HURRY UP AND CHANGE!

RIKI
ISHI

SBC



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ABSOLUTELY.

TO THINK THESE RELATIVELY NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK WOULD RECEIVE SO MUCH ATTENTION...

EVEN THOUGH BOTH BOXERS WERE INMATES AT JUVIE AND SHARE QUITE A HISTORY,

WOULD LISTEN TO THE DEAFENING ROAR OF THE CROWD GATHERED HERE TONIGHT... IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!

THERE'S NOT AN EMPTY SPACE NOR A SILENT WATCHER IN ATTENDANCE TONIGHT!

THAT EVEN THE ENTIRE HALLWAYS ARE FULL WITH PEOPLE WANTING JUST A SINGLE GLIMPSE OF THE FIGHT.

THE ENTIRE STADIUM IS SO PACKED,

I DOUBT EVEN A WORLD TITLE MATCH WOULD DRAW SUCH A LARGE CROWD!

W-WELL...

AND DO YOU THINK THE OUTCOME WILL BE KO OR...?

WHO DO YOU PREDICT WILL BE THE WINNER TONIGHT?

AND IS ON PAR WITH THE LEVEL OF INTEREST USUALLY SHOWN ONLY FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE MATCHES!

YES, FOR SURE! THIS LONG-AWAITED MATCH BETWEEN YABUKI JOE AND RIKIISHI TOORU HAS DRAWN EVEN MORE ATTENTION THAN ANY JAPANESE TITLE-MATCHES I'VE SEEN,

I COULD USUALLY ANALYZE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE GAME TO MAKE A PREDICTION BUT... THIS FIGHT IS UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE!

AND NO MATTER HOW EVEN A MATCH SEEMED,

I'VE BEEN A BOXING COMMENTATOR FOR OVER A DECADE NOW,

I SEE...

I REALLY HAVE NO IDEA AT ALL. IT SEEMS ALMOST AS EQUALLY LIKELY FOR EITHER PLAYER TO COME OUT ON TOP...

I'M AFRAID TO SAY,

RIKIISHI TOORU!

FROM SHIRAKI GYM AND WEIGHING IN AT 118 POUNDS...

IN THE RED CORNER...

WE ARE NOW READY TO BEGIN TONIGHT'S 8-ROUND BANTAMWEIGHT SEMIFINAL MATCH!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

FROM TANGE GYM AND WEIGHING IN AT 117.5 POUNDS...

AND IN THE BLUE CORNER...

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT!

HEH HEH.

YABUKI JOE!

AND WE'VE GOT JUST THE PERFECT STAGE TONIGHT FOR OUR LONG-DESTINED MATCH...

LOOKS LIKE THIS DAY'S FINALLY COME, RIKIISHI...

HEH...

IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE'S BELITTLING WHAT I JUST SAID...

HE'S... HE'S LAUGHING...

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU LAUGHING FOR!?

HEY, JUST WHAT'S SO DAMN FUNNY!?

J-JOE, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU!?

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? MORE LIKE, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM! I'M TRYING TO PUT ON A SERIOUS FIGHT AND HE'S JUST LAUGHING AT ME!

YOU THINK I'D BE A BOXER IF I GAVE A DAMN ABOUT YOUR LITTLE FOULS!?

SHUT UP!

KEEP ON BAD-MOUTHING LIKE THAT ON THE RING AND IT'LL BE A FOUL!

YABUKI!

YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW. IT'S CRAZY THAT I'M NOT SAYING I'LL WIN FOR SURE BEFORE THE MATCH THIS TIME.

WHOEVER WINS TONIGHT-

BUT IN ANY CASE!

LET ME GET ONE THING STRAIGHT WITH YOU, REF!

AND WHILE I'M AT IT,

C-CUT IT OUT ALREADY, JOE!

AND THAT'LL BE A FOUL!

SAY ONE MORE WORD,

I SAID STOP IT, JOE!

IT'LL BE A KO WIN FOR SURE AND YOU'D HAVE TO BE GODDAMN BLIND OR RETARDED NOT TO REALIZE THAT, CONSIDERING RIKIISHI'S AND MY STRENGTH!

WHOEVER WINS TONIGHT WON'T WIN BECAUSE OF POINTS, FOULS, OR WHATEVER PETTY CRAP LIKE THAT!

. . . .

I'LL JUST TAKE HIM BACK TO THE CORNER NOW.

HA... HAHA, WELL I GUESS THAT DOES IT FOR THE PRE-GAME TALK.

MNPH!

FINE! GO AHEAD! I AIN'T AF-

SHEESH...

SBC

SORRY ABOUT ALL THIS, RIKIISHI.

YOU SAY YOU'RE TRYING TO BE SERIOUS 'BOUT THIS FIGHT BUT YOUR DAMN ATTITUDE SURE DOESN'T SHOW IT!

THE HELL ARE YOU TRYIN' TO PULL!?

YO JOE! WHAT'RE YOU GETTING ALL RILED UP NOW FOR!? THAT AIN'T VERY CLASSY!

HOW THE HELL COULD I NOT LOSE MY TEMPER!?

I'M TRYING TO SETTLE THE FIGHT FROM OUR JUVIE DAYS ONCE AND FOR ALL AND THAT GUY'S TREATING IT LIKE ONE BIG JOKE!

HMPH!

I'LL BE YOUR BIGGEST DAMN FAN OUT HERE TONIGHT AND ROOT YOU ON!

AND RIKIISHI! IT AIN'T AS IF I DISLIKE JOE BUT IT'S A WHOLE 'NOTHER MATTER IF HE'S FIGHTING YOU TONIGHT!

SAME HERE!

YOU'RE A TRUE CHAMP, RIKIISHI!

YOU'RE JUST AS INTENSE, CHARISMATIC, AND STRONG AS JOE IS BUT UNLIKE HIM, YOU'RE ALSO CLASSY!

I LOVE YOU, RIKIISHI!

GRRRRR!

NNNNGHHHH!

YEAH, TEACH'EM A LESSON!

LET ME SHOW YOU BASTARDS WITH MY FISTS JUST HOW DAMN CLASSY OUR BRO IS!

WHOEVER SAID THAT SHOULD GET HIS ASS OVER HERE!

WHAT WAS THAT!? YOU THINK OUR JOE'S NOT CLASSY!?

YOU'RE THE WILDEST BEAST OF THIS CENTURY!

JOE! I'M GONNA SUPPORT YOU NO MATTER WHAT ANY OF'EM IDIOTS SAY!

YOU'RE THE ICE-COLD KILLER THAT MAKES THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE!

JOE'S ROUGHNESS IS WHAT MAKES HIM SO APPEALING!

YOU PEOPLE DON'T KNOW JACK!

WE LOVE YOU, JOE!

OH RIGHT.

GOT ANY MONEY THOUGH?

YO, GO BUY THAT MAN A PACK OF SMOKES.

HEY, THAT MISTER'S PRETTY COOL.

YABUKI!

RIIII-
KIIIIII-
SHIIIII!

RIKIISHI!

YOU CAN DO IT, JOE!

RIKIISHI!

JOE!

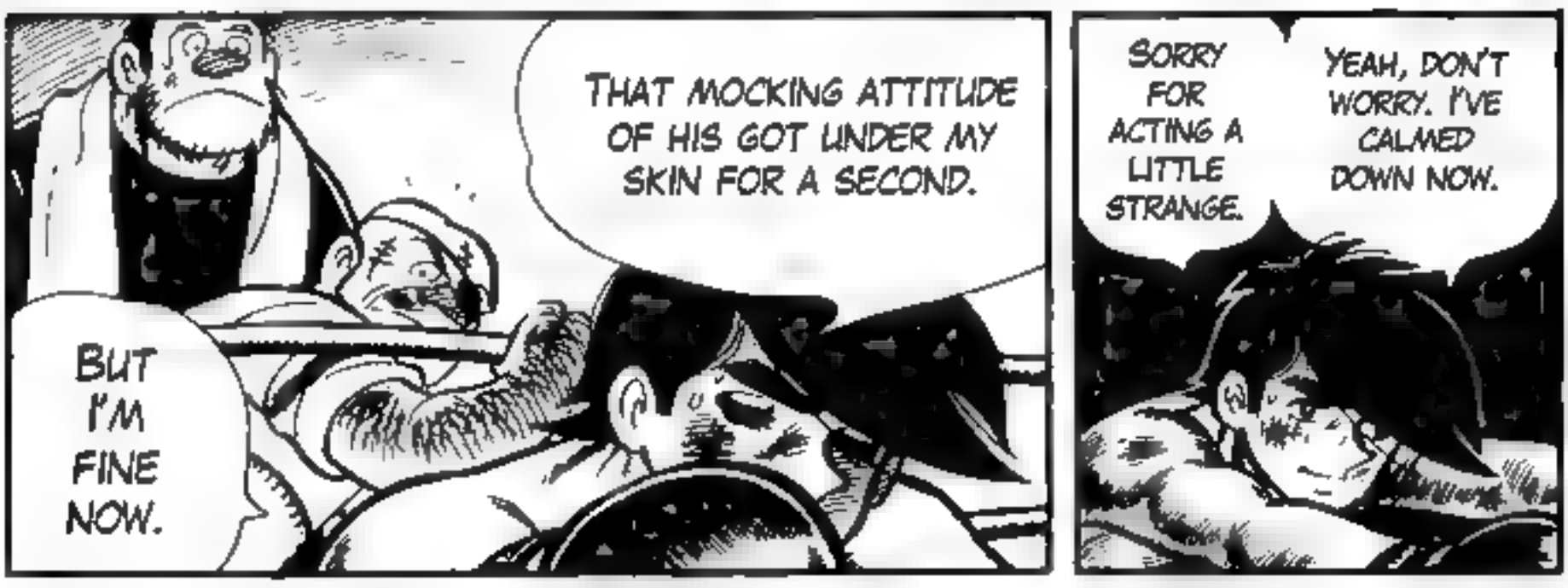
TOO MANY BOXERS ARE RAISED LIKE COLD, EFFICIENT, FIGHTING MACHINES BY THEIR GYMS THESE DAYS TO DEVELOP ANY REAL CHARISMA TO RILE UP THE FANS. CLEARLY, THAT'S NOT THE CASE WITH EITHER BOXERS TONIGHT...

YES, IT'S QUITE SOME-THING...

THE CROWD'S GROWING EVEN WILDER BEFORE THE BELL'S RUNG!

WOW, JUST HEAR THE CROWD TONIGHT.
MY EARS ARE GOING DEAF.
WHEN'S THE DAMN BELL GONNA RING?

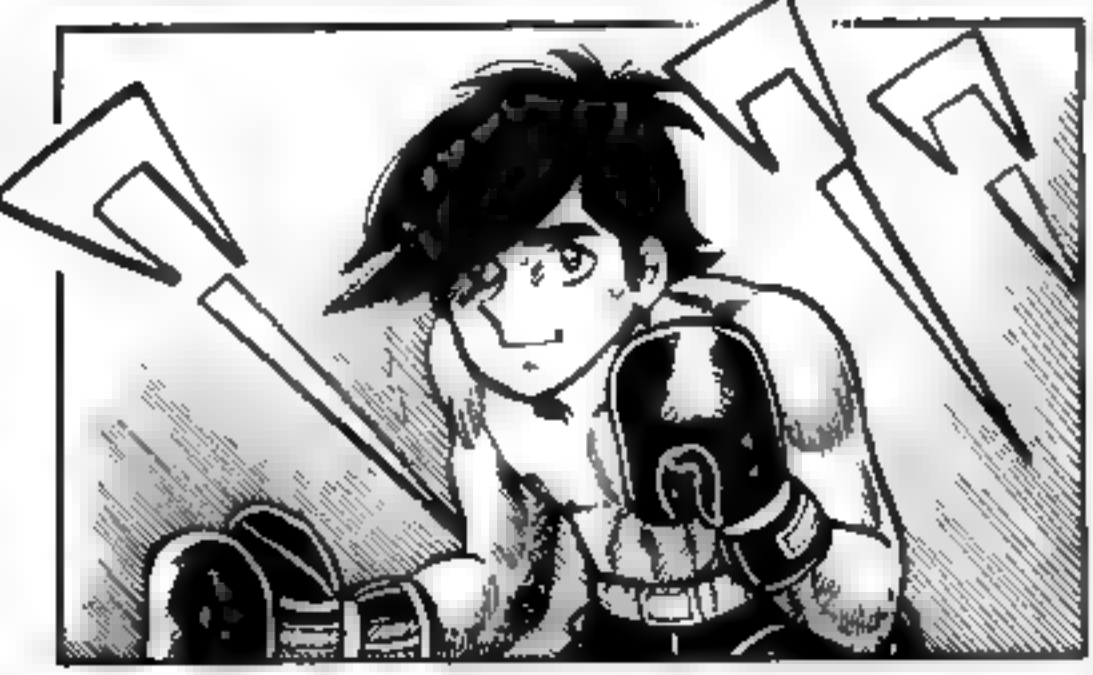
YOU LOSE YOUR CONCENTRATION AND ALL THE EFFORT THAT WENT INTO THE NO-GUARD SWAY-BACK STRATEGY WILL BE MADE MOOT.
STAY CALM OUT THERE, JOE.
RIGHT...
SECONDS HAVE TO STEP OUTSIDE THE RING NOW.


THAT MOCKING ATTITUDE OF HIS GOT UNDER MY SKIN FOR A SECOND.
BUT I'M FINE NOW.
SORRY FOR ACTING A LITTLE STRANGE.
YEAH, DON'T WORRY. I'VE CALMED DOWN NOW.

HUH... TALK ABOUT A 180...

YEAH...

NOW GET OUT THERE, JOE!



NOW THAT'S WHAT WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR!

IT'S TIME FOR YOUR FAMOUS NO-GUARD STANCE!

GO GET 'IM, KILLER JOE!

YOU MIGHT'VE BEEN LUCKY WITH WOLF BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK RIKIISHI'LL BE THE SAME!?

HA! LOOK AT THAT IDIOT! I BET THAT'S THE ONLY STANCE HE ACTUALLY KNOWS!

TALK ABOUT NAÏVE!

HMPH.

WHOA.

WHOA.

TAKE,

NGH!

THIS!

WHOA.

HA HA...

HEH HEH.

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

SINCE THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'VE BEEN PREPARING FOR.
BETTER FOR ME,
JUST LIKE I THOUGHT, HE'S STICKING WITH HIS UPPERCUT TACTIC...

THE ROUND'S ONLY JUST BEGUN!
WHAT'S WRONG, RIKIISHI?

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

WHOA-

WOAH-

AH-

HAH!

DON'T EVEN OPEN YOUR MOUTHS IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE GAME! A STRAIGHT FROM RIKIISHI IS EXACTLY WHAT JOE, THE CROSS-COUNTER MASTER, IS WAITING FOR!

SHUT UP, YOU BAND-WAGONERS!

ARE UPPER-CUTS THE ONLY THING YOU KNOW HOW TO DO!?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, RIKIISHI!?

GIVE HIM A STRAIGHT! A STRAIGHT!

IT'LL ONLY SAP THE ENERGY FROM YOUR HUNGRY BODY!

BUT THOSE UPPERCUTS AIN'T GONNA CUT IT EITHER!

MIX IT UP WITH SOME HOOKS AND JABS INSTEAD!

RIKIISHI...

AND HIT!

SWAY-BACK,

THAT'S IT, JOE!

JUST LIKE THAT!

STOP!

I'D SAY JOE'S LEADING 5-4 IN POINTS.

WOW... WHAT DO YOU THINK THE POINTS ARE LIKE AFTER THAT FIRST ROUND?

I HAVE TO SAY, HIS SWAY-BACKS HAVE IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY!

YABUKI MANAGED TO GET IN SOME GOOD STRAIGHTS BY EXPLOITING THE WIDE SWING OF AN UPPERCUT.

HM...?

LOOKING AT YABUKI'S FACE, I'M NOT SO SURE HE'S HAPPY ABOUT THAT FIRST ROUND.

YES, I THINK SO TOO BUT...

YOU'RE DOING PRETTY SWELL OUT THERE.

GOOD JOB.

WHAT!?

OLD MAN... I THINK I'M AT A BIG DISADVANTAGE HERE...

SBC

YOU WERE CLEARLY THE WINNER OF THAT FIRST ROUND!

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

SO DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOSER-TALK, GOT IT!?

WEAR HIM DOWN...?

HA HA...

DON'T WORRY, YOU'RE DOING GREAT OUT THERE!

JUST KEEP ON WEARING HIM DOWN BY DODGING THOSE UPPER-CUTS AND STRIKING BACK WITH STRAIGHTS.

BUT WITH MY WHOLE BODY NOT BEHIND MY PUNCHES, THEY AREN'T GONNA DO JACK SHIT.

SURE, I MAY BE LEADING IN TERMS OF POINTS,

I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO CENTER MYSELF IF I WANT TO LAND THOSE STRAIGHTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER SWAYING BACK.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

WORTHLESS PUNCHES, HUH...

HM...

BUT THINKING I CAN WIN WITH THAT ALONE IS JUST PURE DELUSION.

LEADING IN POINTS ISN'T A BAD THING,

MY OPPONENT IS RIKIISHI.

DON'T JUST ASSUME THAT I CAN DODGE EVERY ONE OF HIS PUNCHES FOR 8 WHOLE ROUNDS.

YOU MAKE A GOOD POINT...

MEANWHILE, ALL RIKIISHI HAS TO DO IS LAND ONE OR TWO GOOD UPPERCUTS OVER THE COURSE OF 8 ROUNDS TO SETTLE THE FIGHT.

PANICKING NOW AIN'T GONNA HELP.

IT'S FINE...

SHUT IT, YOU THINK WE DON'T REALIZE THAT!?

BUT SWITCHING OVER TO THE USUAL IN-FIGHTING STRATEGY IS ONLY GOING TO MAKE IT MORE LIKELY FOR RIKIISHI TO LAND AN UPPERCUT...!

SECONDS OUT!

AND HOPE THAT MY INSTINCT CAN EXPLOIT WHATEVER CHANCES COME UP.

I'LL JUST STICK TO THE PLAN FOR NOW,

THAT'S ALL I CAN HOPE FOR...

COME ON, JOE! DO YOUR BEST!
WALK ALL OVER HIM!
DOMINATE HIM JUST LIKE YOU DID IN THE FIRST ROUND, JOE!
GO JOEEEE!

THAT'S EASIER SAID THAN DONE...!

HAHA, I APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT BUT...

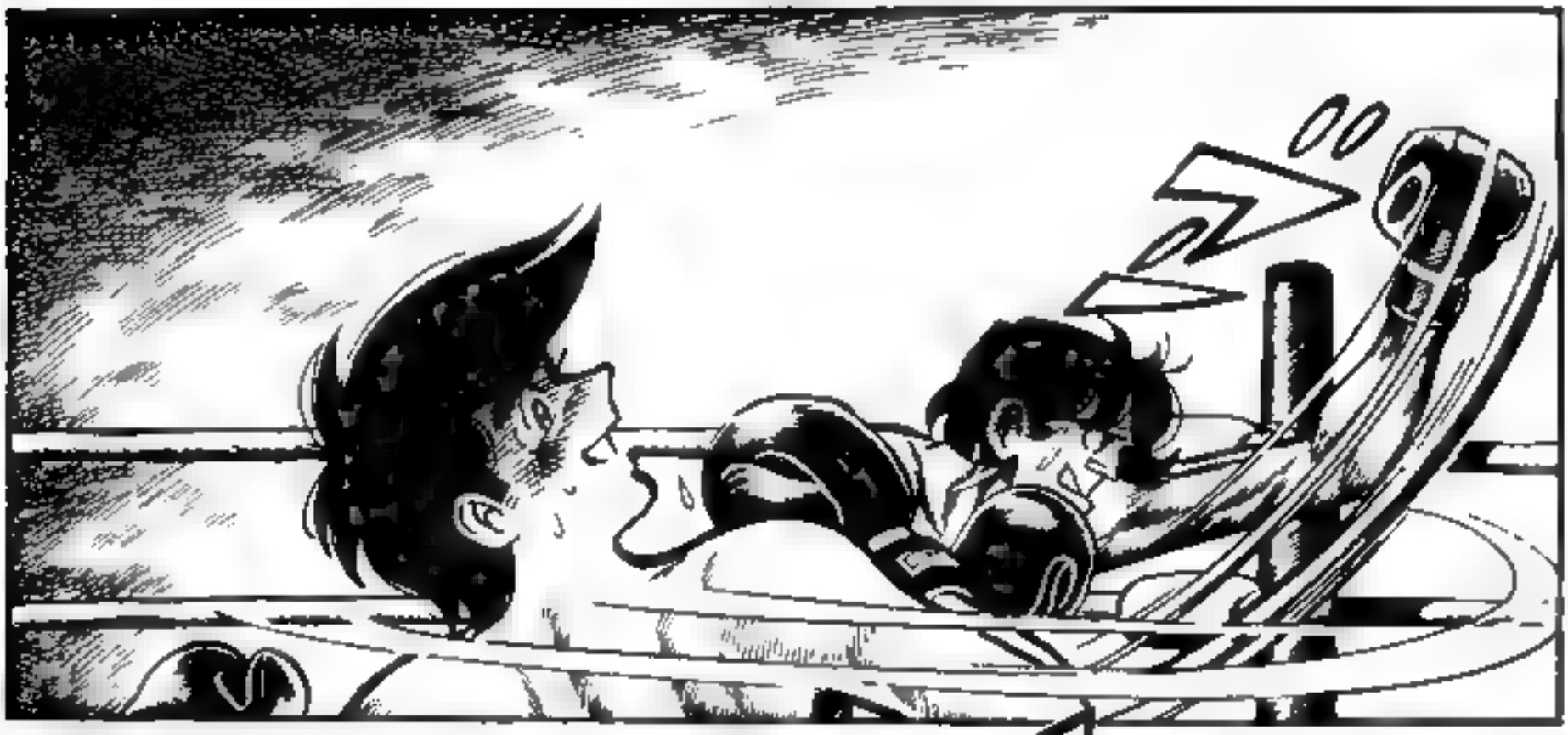
WHOA!

WHEW!

WHOA!

AH!

AH!



CAN'T THAT IDIOT REALIZE HIS STRATEGY WON'T WORK ON JOE ALREADY!?

PANT
PANT
PANT
HEH.

WAIT...

HA...

PANT

PANT

MAYBE... JUST MAYBE, HE'S BECOME SO SINGLE-MINDED THAT EVEN AS HIS STAMINA DRAINS AWAY, THE ONLY THING HE CAN DO IS CONTINUE TO PUNCH UPPERCUTS...

THE ONE STANDING IN FRONT OF ME IS A BOXER WHO STUBBORNLY LET HALF OF HIS BODY WASTE AWAY JUST TO FIGHT ME...

I MEAN, IT'S RIKIISHI BUT NOT RIKIISHI-RIKIISHI...

SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS ISN'T THE RIKIISHI I KNEW

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

I DIDN'T PAY TO SEE A [illegible] CONTEST!

WHAT'S WRONG, YOU TWO!?

FIGHT!

IT MIGHT BE BEST TO JUST RISK TAKING ONE OR TWO OF'EM RIGHT NOW IN RETURN FOR 5 OR 6 POWERFUL BLOWS...

IF HE ACCIDENTALLY DID LET HIS STAMINA DROP TOO RAPIDLY WITH THOSE CONSECUTIVE UPPERS, THEN THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO BE SO AFRAID OF'EM...

FINE, COME AT M-

H-HE'S COMING...

MMM!!

AH!

C-CLOSE CALL...

DON'T YOU KNOW A SINGLE MISTAKE CAN COST YOU EVERYTHING!?

WHAT ARE YOU SPACING OUT THERE FOR, YOU DUMBASS!

UGH.

Y-YEAH, I KNOW...

THANK GOD I MANAGED TO SENSE HIS INTENT,

AND INSTINCTIVELY SWAY BACK IN TIME.

THEY LITERALLY CUT UPWARDS LIKE A RAZOR...

EVEN THOUGH THE UPPERCUT ONLY GRAZED JOE'S CHEEKS JUST NOW...

AH! LOOK, NISHI!

AHH!

LOOKS LIKE I UNDERESTIMATED HIM.

I DEFINITELY SHOULD BE AFRAID OF HIS UPPERCUTS...

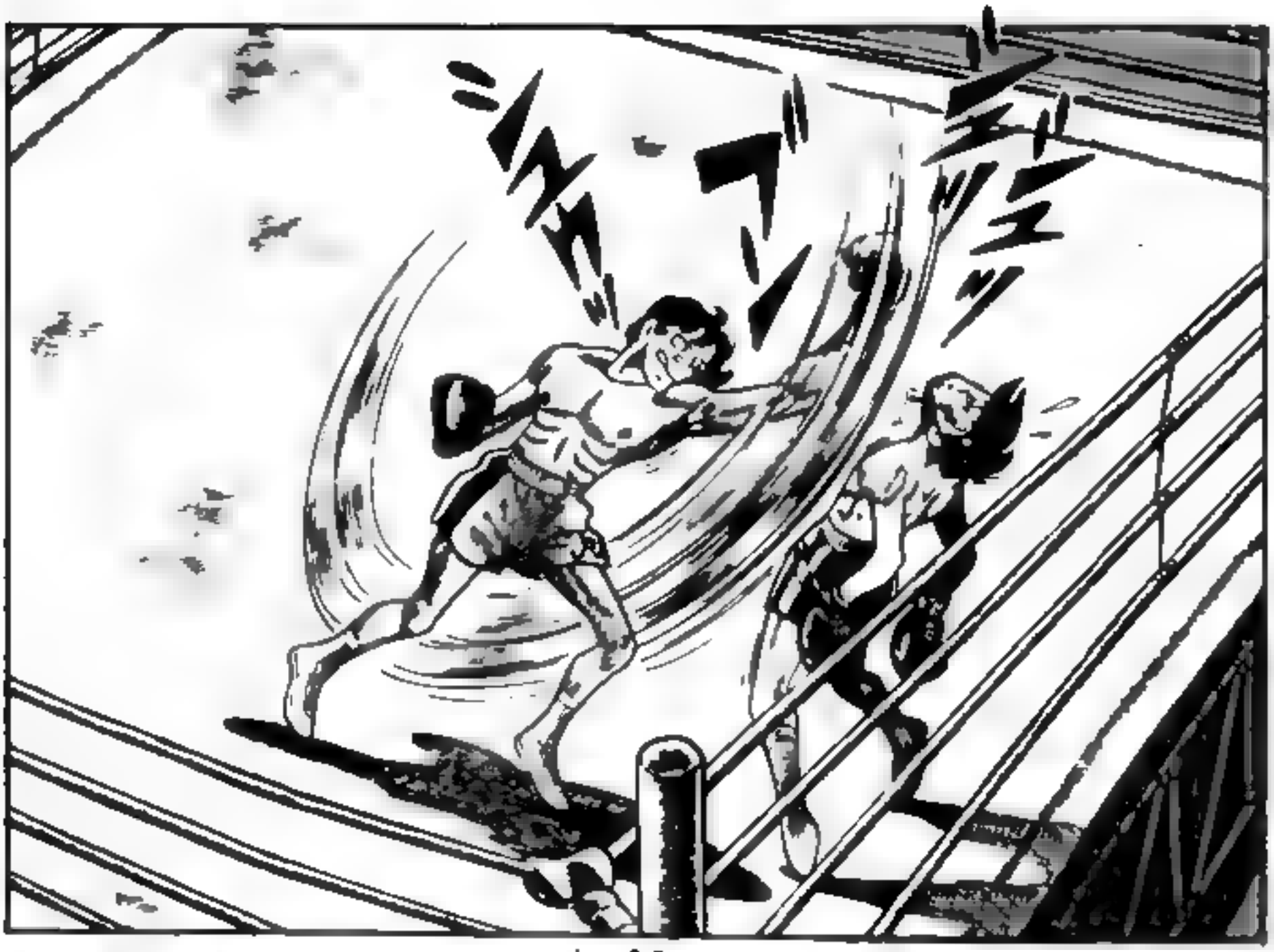
PANT

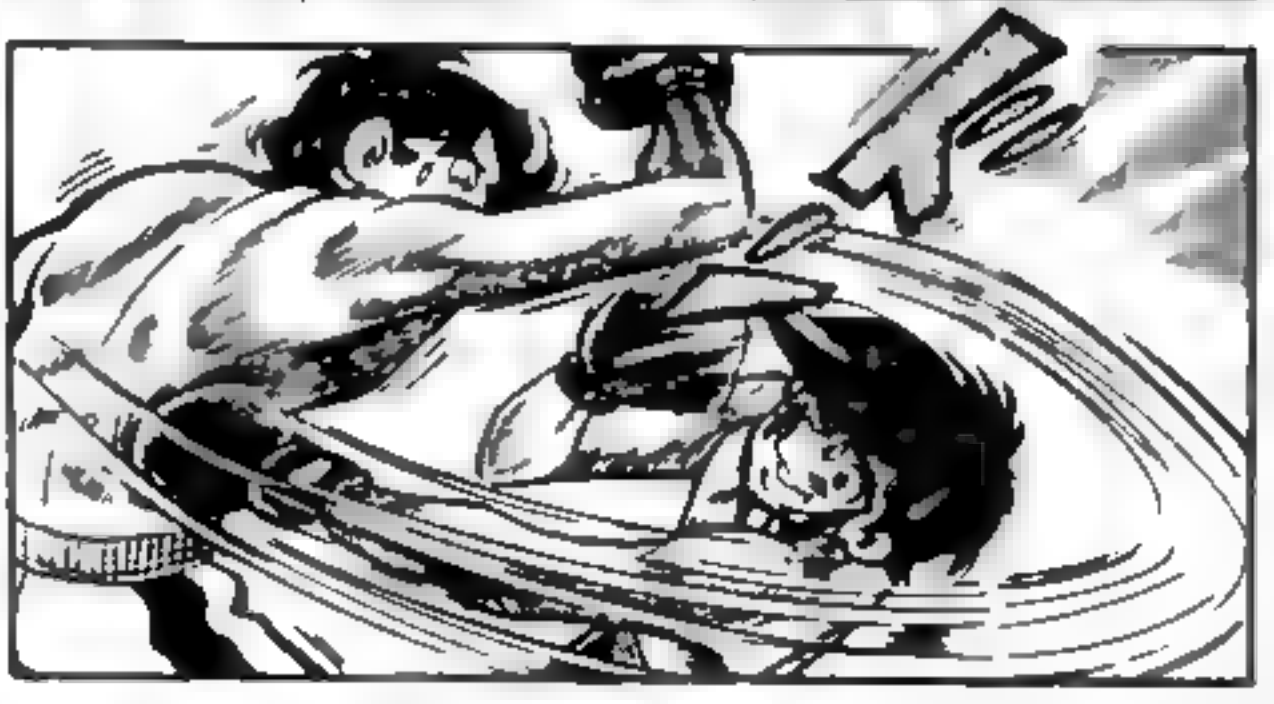
PANT

PANT

GULP...

AGHHH!





RETURN TO YOUR CORNER!
THAT'S THE BELL!

BUT YOU STILL FOUGHT PRETTY WELL IN THE LATTER HALF OF THAT ROUND.

THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL,

JOE, WHERE'RE YOU GOING!?

CUT THE OBVIOUS BULLSHIT! YOU AND I BOTH KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN THAT ROUND!

YOUR CORNER'S THIS WAY!

I FEEL LIKE I'M RUNNING RIGHT AT A CANNON BARREL WHILE ARMED WITH A BAMBOO SPEAR.

THIS IS... THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER FELT SO PATHETIC AND POWERLESS...

NISHI, THE BANDAGE.

RIGHT.

STOP WITH THE LOSER TALK! IT AIN'T LIKE YOU, JOE!

I... I'M SCARED TO MY WITS THINKING OF THE FINAL MOMENT WHEN THAT CANNON FINALLY HITS...

BUT THE OUTCOME'S CLEAR NO MATTER WHICH WAY YOU LOOK AT IT.

SURE, A SPEAR MIGHT BE BETTER THAN A CANNON IN ACCURACY...

AS SOON AS YOU DODGE ONE OF HIS UPPERS, CLOSE RIGHT IN ON HIM.

JUST LISTEN.

YOU'VE GOT AN IDEA?

I GUESS WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO TRY A RISKIER BUT MORE AGGRESSIVE PLAN.

BUT FINE...

STICK RIGHT TO HIS BODY AS SOON AS YOU SWAY BACK!

GOT IT?

. . .

AS LONG AS YOU STICK RIGHT TO HIS BODY, RIKIISHI WON'T HAVE TIME TO CREATE ENOUGH SPACE FOR AN UPPERCUT!

THAT'S WHEN YOU'LL ATTACK WITH HOOKS.

BUT BEGGARS CAN'T BE CHOOSERS...

NOT THE BEST ATTACK,

SHORT HOOKS, HUH...

YOUR NATURAL AGILITY SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE THAT MUCH.

IT'S FINE!

TIMING'LL BE A BITCH...

ALRIGHT, I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT... THANKS...

WITH YOUR POWER AND RIKIISHI'S WITHERED BODY, IT SHOULD STILL BE ENOUGH TO KNOCK HIM DOWN!

EVEN IF IT *IS* A SHORT HOOK,

STOP YOUR SELF-PITYING ALREADY!

H-HE SAID THANKS...

DID I JUST HEAR WHAT I THINK I DID...?

N-NISHI...

HE'S DEFINITELY NOT HIS NORMAL SELF TODAY.

TO THINK I'D EVER HEAR THAT FROM HIM...

THANKS, HUH...

HE'S COMING!

AH-

I KNOW!

NOW, JOE!

GOOD!

HAH!

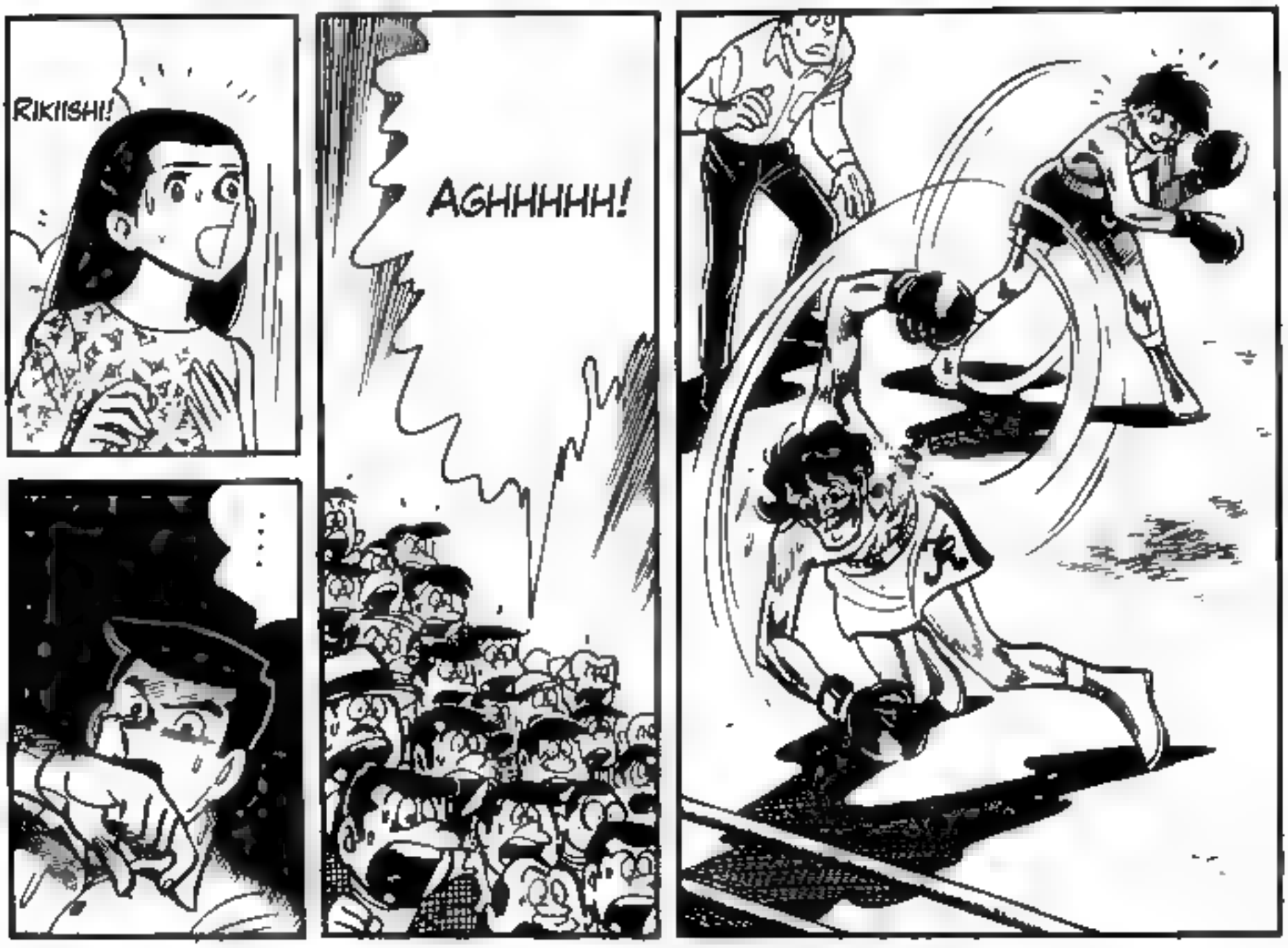
AHHHH!

AH-

KEEP THE HOOKS COMING!

THAT'S IT, JOE!

UGH...!


RIKIISHI!
AGHHHHH!

PANT

PANT

PANT

LOOKS LIKE YABUKI'S DITCHED THE IDEA OF HANGING ONTO HIS LEAD IN POINTS IN FAVOUR OF INFLICTING MORE DAMAGE FOR A KO!

AN AMAZING SERIES OF HOOKS!

HAHA.

HA...

NO NEED TO SCREAM YOUR LUNGS OUT...

I CAN HEAR YOU JUST FINE, OLD MAN.

DON'T EVEN GIVE HIM A SINGLE MOMENT'S REST! GET RIGHT IN THERE!

JOE!

YOU AFRAID TO SHOW ME YOUR UPPERS!?

C'MON, RIKIISHI!

JUST LIKE BEFORE!

GOOD,

HAHA... PUNCH ME ALL YOU WANT, JOE!

THAT WAY, YOUR ARMS AND LEGS WILL GET TIRED OUT EVEN FASTER!

YOU'RE STILL LAUGHING AT ME EVEN AS YOU'VE GOT A BLOODY NOSE!?

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I HATE ABOUT YOU!

THE HELL DID YOU SAY!?

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO DAMN SUPERIOR!

AH!

YOU'RE FREE TO THINK,

WHETHER THAT'S TRUE OR NOT,

WHATEVER YOU WANT!

THAT'S THE RIKIISHI I KNOW!

COME ON, BEAT HIS ASS!

UGH!

EVEN RIKIISHI'S USING HOOKS NOW!

AHH!

DAMN IT!

A-AHHH!

STAY RIGHT BY HIM AND KEEP'EM COMING!

THAT'S IT, JOE! THERE'S NO NEED TO BE AFRAID OF RIKIISHI'S HOOKS ALONE!

RIKIISHI WITH THE BLOODY NOSE AND YABUKI DRENCHED IN SWEAT!

BOTH PLAYERS GOING FULL OUT WITH AN IN-FIGHTING APPROACH!

I-IT'S A FLURRY OF HOOKS OUT THERE!

YOU'RE NOT IN ANY WAY INFERIOR WHEN IT COMES TO SHORT HOOKS!

HA HA...

YOU'LL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF WINNING...

OR AT THE VERY LEAST,

AH-

HEH.

I DIDN'T EXPECT HE COULD SO QUICKLY SWITCH BACK TO HIS UPPERCUT STRATEGY...!

T-THAT WAS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT!

AHH!

AHHH!

UGH...

NGH...

HAHA...

HA,

DAMN YOU...

AH-

S-STOP, YOU IDIOT!

IT'S TOO DANGEROUS TO CLOSE IN NOW!

STOP!

BACKING AWAY?

WHAT'S THE MATTER, DON'T LIKE ME GETTING SO CLOSE?

DON'T GET SO EAGER TO CLOSE IN!

SWAY-BACK AND AIM FOR OPENINGS AFTER HIS UPPERCUTS!

IF THAT'S HOW RIKIISHI'S GOING TO PLAY THINGS, THEN YOU'VE GOTTA GO BACK TO OUR INITIAL PLAN!

IS ONLY MAKING ME LOSE MY FOCUS.

ALL YOUR YELLING ABOUT THIS AND THAT,

HMPH.

WHOA.

WHEW.

WHOA.

HAH.

AH-

HUFF

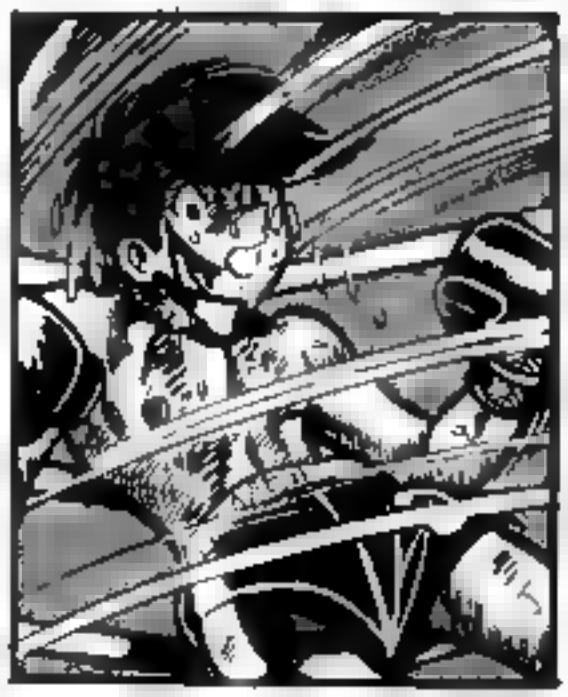
HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

PANT

PANT



WHAT'S WRONG, JOE?

I HAVE TO SAY, ALL YOUR DODGING IS REMINDING ME OF LIL' AOYAMA BACK FROM OUR JUVIE DAYS.

IT'S GETTING EVEN HARDER TO CLOSE IN...

DAMN IT...

IT ALMOST FEELS AS IF HIS UPPERS ARE QUICKER..

THAT MY MOVEMENTS ARE GROWING SLOWER...?

OR COULD IT BE...

AH-

IS TELLING YOU TO AIM FOR OPENINGS LEFT AFTER MY UPPERCUTS...

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOUR COACH,

I'VE GOT ANOTHER UPPERCUT COMING RIGHT NOW.

COME ON THEN.

COME!

WHAT'S WRONG!?

AREN'T YOU GOING TO COME AT ME!?

HAH!

AHH!

N-NOW...!

DAMN IT...

HE'S FLAT ON HISS BACK!

A DOWN FROM YABUKI!

AH...

H-HE DID IT!

YABUKI'S DOWN!

AHH!

B-BACK TO YOUR CORNER!

WAIT UNTIL THE REF COUNTS DOWN TO 8 BEFORE STANDING UP SO YOU CAN GET A LITTLE BREATHER!

YOU IDIOT, SIT YOUR ASS BACK DOWN!

WHAT THE...

IT'S NOT AS IF I UNDER-ESTIMATE RIKIISHI'S STRENGTH BUT...

WELL I MUST ADMIT I'M QUITE SHOCKED.

NO, I BELIEVE THAT WAS A CLEAR-CUT DOWN.

JUST A SLIP OR...?

W-WAS THAT...

GIVEN THAT MOMENTUM...

YES. THE PUNCH CAME RIGHT AFTER YABUKI'S SWAYBACK WITH HIM THROWING OUT HIS BODY FORWARD TO CLOSE IN ON RIKIISHI.

A COUNTER ...!?

YES, THE SUDDENNESS OF IT TOOK ME BY SURPRISE TOO BUT LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING. I'M SURE THAT SHORT PUNCH ACTUALLY HAD THE POWER OF A COUNTER.

TO THINK THAT SHORT PUNCH OF HIS JUST NOW WOULD ACTUALLY KNOCK DOWN YABUKI...

DAMN IT...

WELL WHAT A SURPRISE THIS IS! THE MASTER OF THE COUNTER GOT HIT WITH A COUNTER HIMSELF!

HE WAS WAITING FOR ME TO CLOSE IN...!

I SUPPOSE THAT WOULD MAKE IT A TEXTBOOK EXAMPLE OF A COUNTER.

I SEE!

FIGHT!

BUT I WON'T FALL FOR THAT AGAIN...

HAVE YOU!?

HEH... STILL HAVEN'T LEARNED A THING...

WHOA-

NGHH...

WHY YOU...

JOE!

AHH!

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO TAKE A BREATHER WHEN THE REF'S COUNTING DOWN!?

YOU GODDAMN IDIOT!

MOVE OUTTA THE WAY!

4!

3!

YABUKI'S KNOCKED DOWN AGAIN!

IT'S A DOWN!

STOP! THAT'S THE END OF THE ROUND!
IT'D BEEN 3 DOWNS IN ONE ROUND! AN AUTOMATIC LOSS!
JUST IMAGINE WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF YOU WERE KNOCKED DOWN ONE MORE TIME THAT ROUND!
GET YOUR ASS BACK HERE!
OR IS THAT CHARMING RIKIISHI SWEEPING YOU OFF YOUR FEET!?
CAN'T FIND YOUR FOOTING!?
WHAT'S WRONG, JOE!?
AHAHAHAHA!
COULD YOU NOT HEAR ME OUT THERE OR SOMETHING!?
NISHI, GET ME SOME OINTMENT!
JUST SIT DOWN FOR NOW.
O-OK...

ALL I'M DOING IS TIRING OUT MY ARMS AND LEGS FASTER...

AS FRUSTRATING AS IT IS, IT'S EXACTLY AS RIKIISHI SAID...

TRYING TO CLOSE IN ON HIM ONLY GETS ME COUNTERED.

HERE...

HE'S A REAL FORMIDABLE ONE...

IT'S NO GOOD...

BUT THINGS HAVE TAKEN A SUDDEN TURN FOR THE WORSE FOR HIM.

IT SEEMED LIKE IT WAS ONLY A MINUTE AGO WHEN YABUKI WAS STILL AS ENERGETIC AS EVER,

IT WAS ALSO TO PREVENT ANY OF YOUR OTHER NORMAL PUNCHES FROM BEING EFFECTIVE...

THAT UPPERCUT STRATEGY OF HIS WASN'T JUST TO MAKE YOUR CROSS-COUNTERS USELESS...

RIKIISHI'S CALM DEMEANOR, THOUGH NOT OVERCONFIDENT, CERTAINLY SHOWS HOW MUCH AT EASE HE IS.

MEANWHILE IN THE OTHER CORNER...

SBC

IT'S PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE CONSIDERING HOW RIKIISHI'S EASILY FINDING A COUNTER TO EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YABUKI'S PLANS.

YES...

HIS WHOLE CORNER IS AS SILENT AND GLOOMY AS A FUNERAL...

YOU ANNOUNCERS AND YOUR RETARDED ANALOGIES!

WHAT THE HELL DID YOU JUST SAY!?

WHAT'S LEFT IS ONLY HOW HE SHALL COOK IT!

IT APPEARS AS IF HIS PREY HAS BEEN TRAPPED AT LAST!

LISTEN TO ME, JOE. GETTING ALL RILED UP OR PANICKING AIN'T GONNA IMPROVE YOUR SITUATION ONE BIT.

JUST STICK TO THE CLOSING-IN STRATEGY.

S-STOP IT, JOE!

I OUGHTA COOK YOU TWO INSTEAD!

SIT BACK DOWN!

YEAH, YEAH, BUT THE PROBLEM IS *HOW* TO EXACTLY CLOSE IN...

UNDERSTAND!?

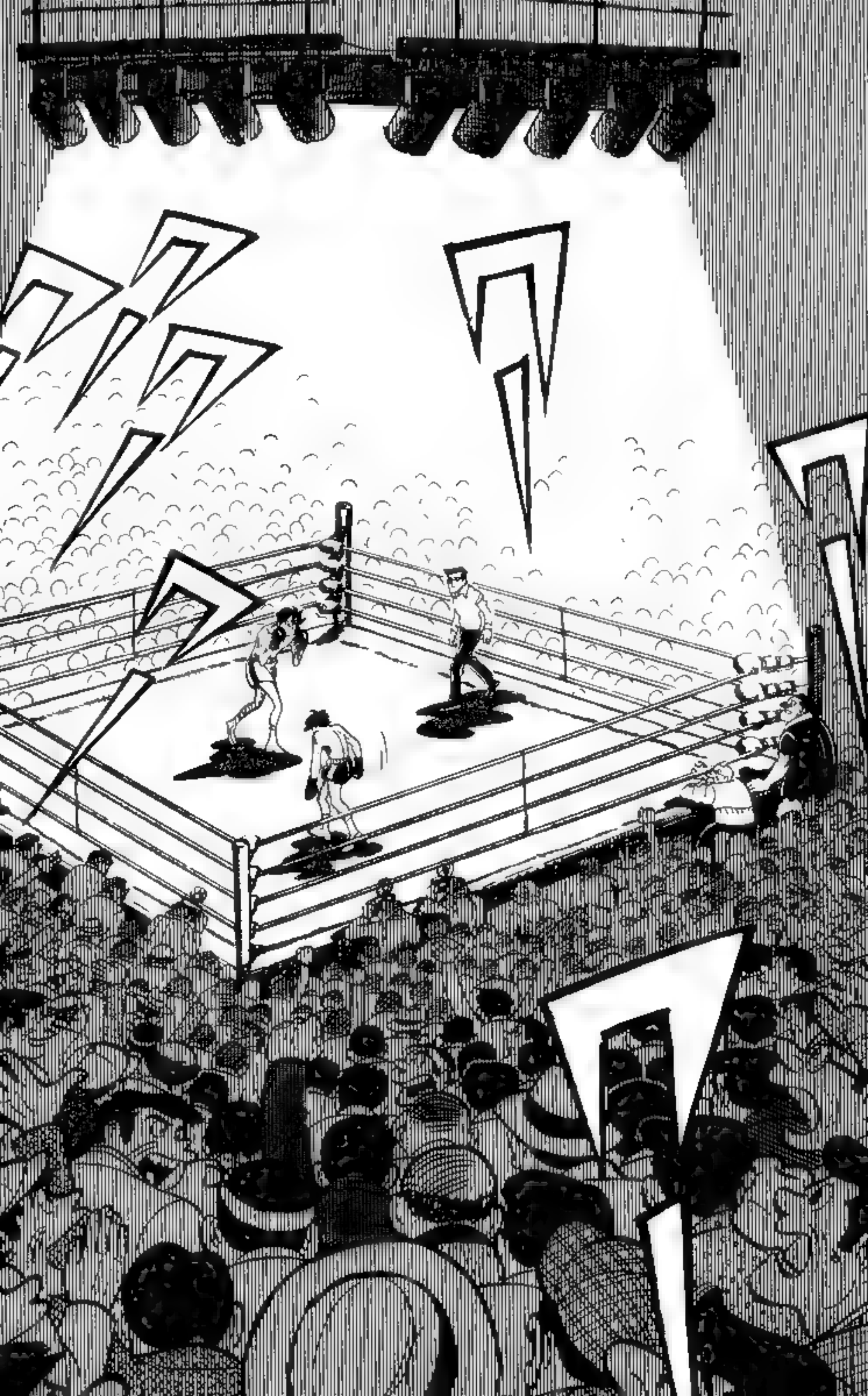
THAT'S STILL BY FAR THE BEST WINNING CHANCE YOU'VE GOT!

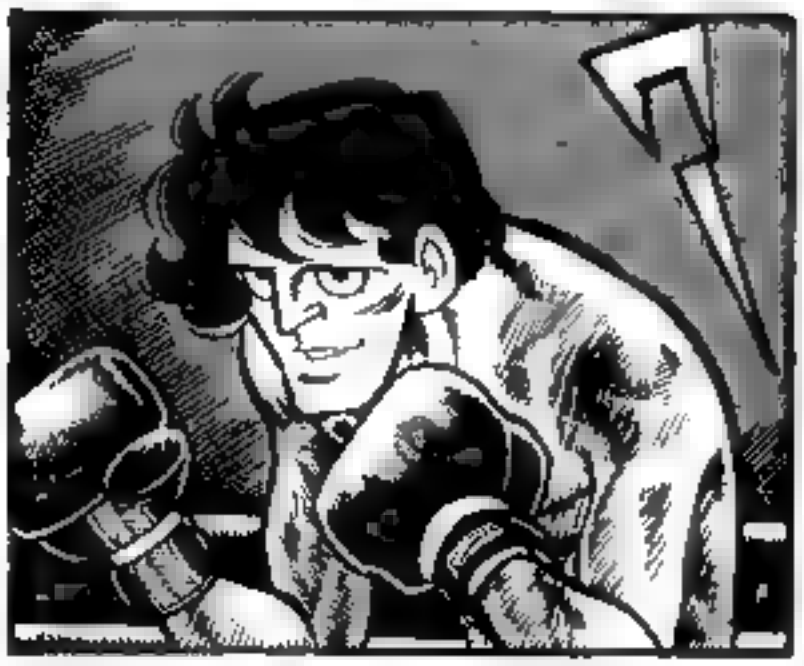
AGHHHH!

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER FELT SO CLUELESS GOING INTO A ROUND...

GREAT, THERE GOES THE BELL...

I'M RACKING MY BRAIN AND I STILL CAN'T *COME UP* WITH ANY GOOD IDEAS...





FIGHT!
FACE EACH OTHER AND...

I GUESS I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO START THINGS MYSELF THEN...
OH WELL...

NOT GONNA TRY AND CLOSE IN ANYMORE?
WHAT'S WRONG, JOE?

ANOTHER UPPERCUT COMING RIIIIIGHT UP...!

C'MON, JOE! AIN'T NOTHING GONNA START FROM RUNNING AWAY ALL DAY!

YOU GOTTA CLOSE IN AND PUMMEL HIM!

DAMN...

I'M ONLY DELAYING THE INEVITABLE AT THIS RATE...

LOOKS LIKE...

BUT TO JUST FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING AND THROW MYSELF IN THERE!

I HAVE NO CHOICE...

AH-

I GOT IN...

HA, I DID IT!

WHA-

AHHH!

KEEP PUMMELLING HIM WITH SHORT HOOKS!

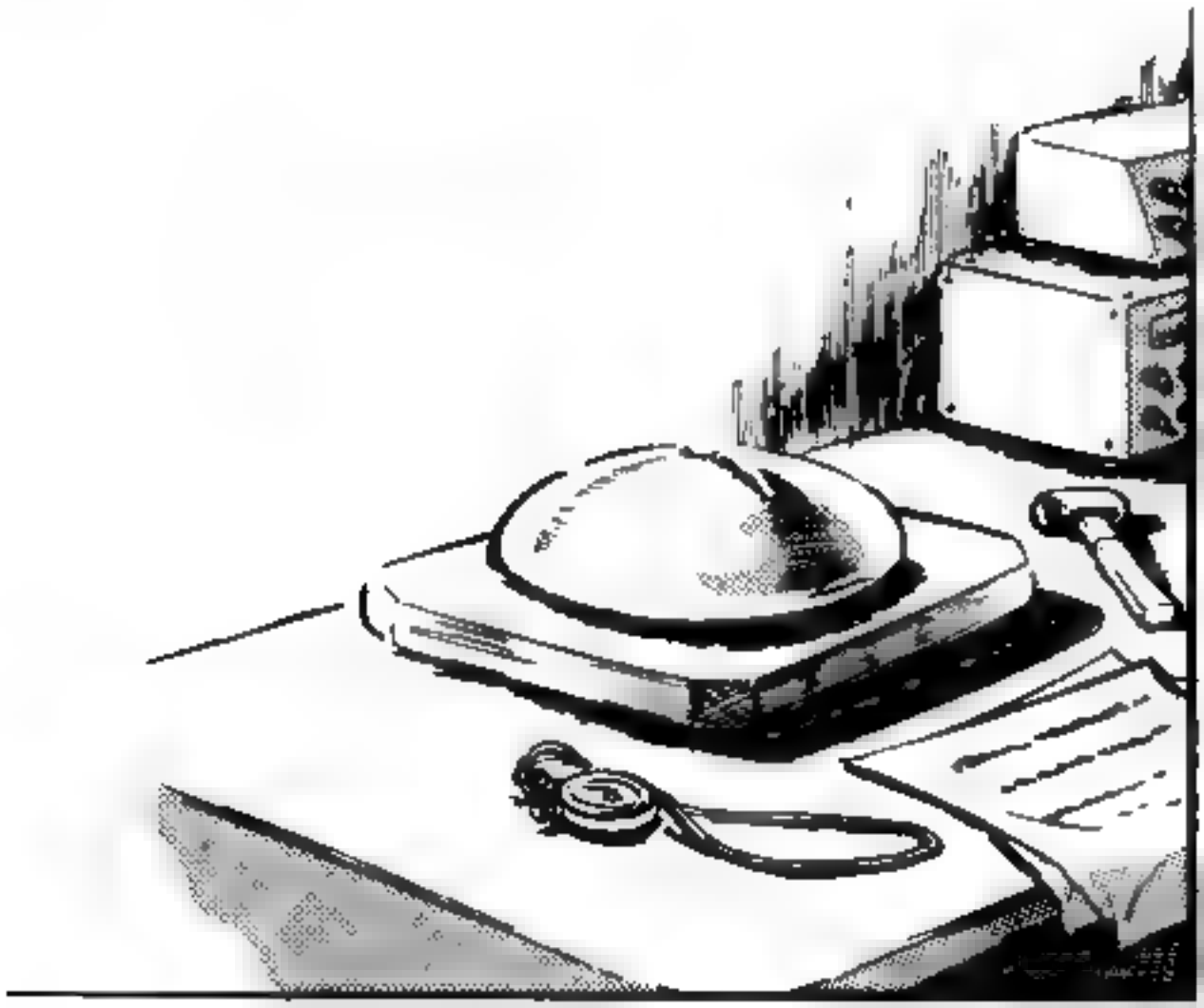
THAT'S IT, JOE!

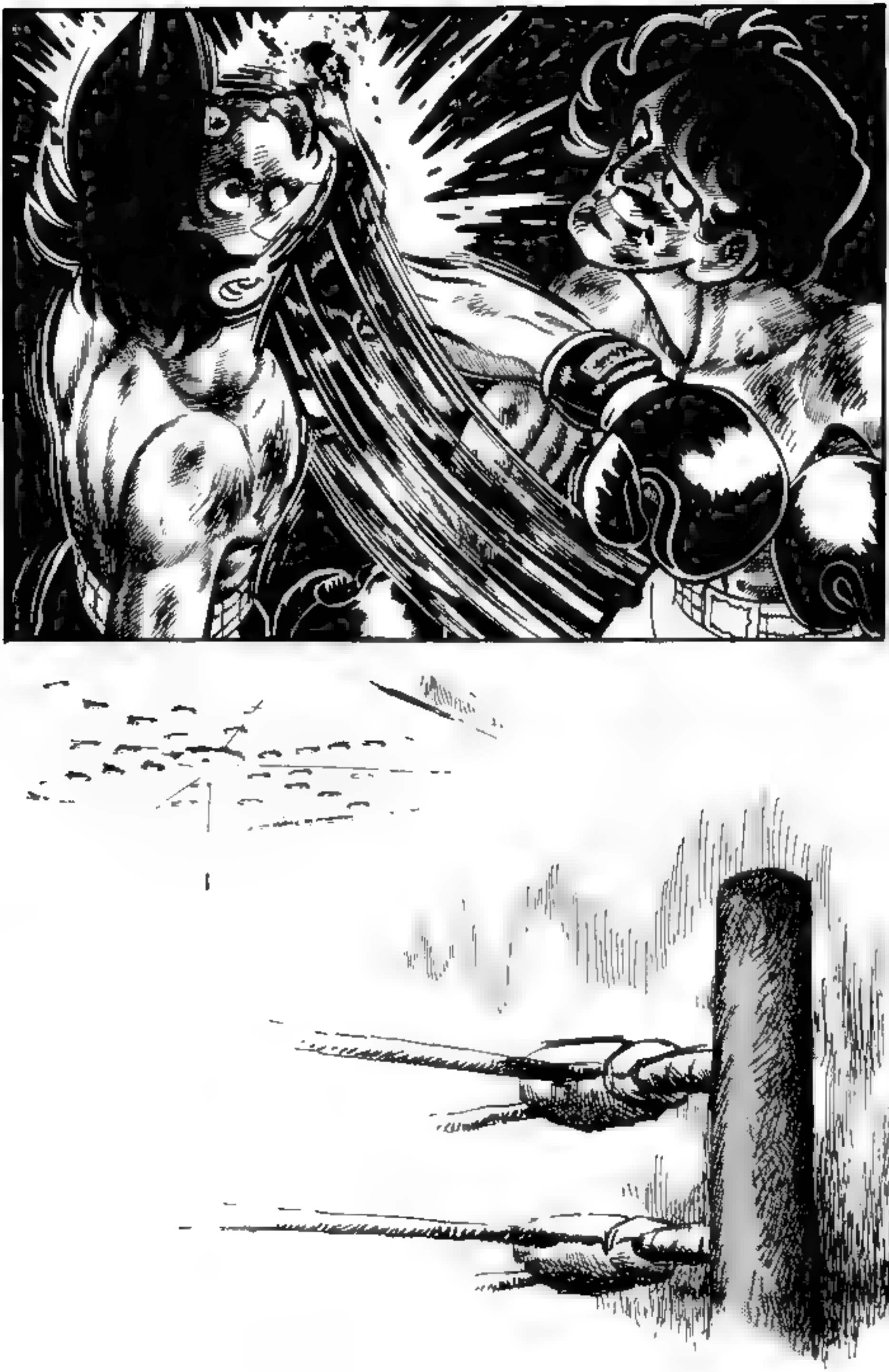
IN FACT, THAT ONLY MAKES IT ALL THE MORE EASIER!

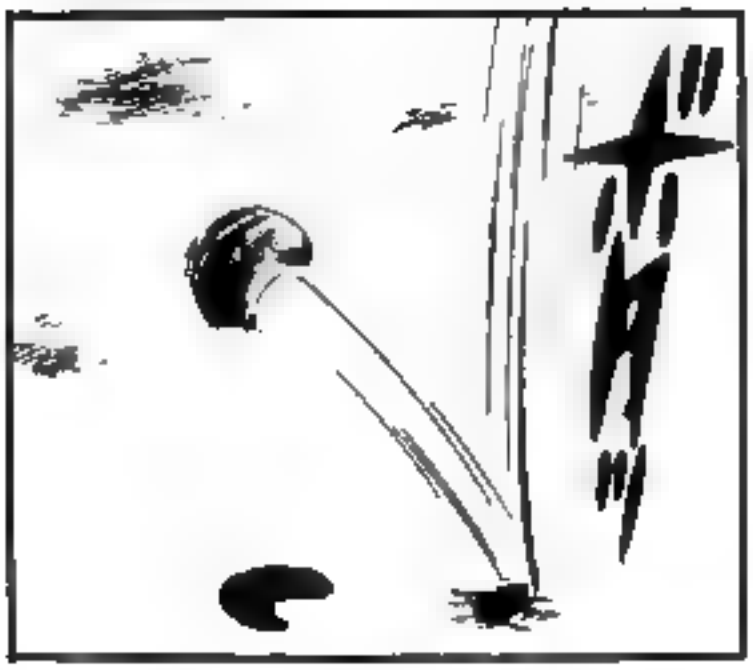
AH-!?

DIDN'T I SHOW YOU IN THE PREVIOUS ROUND IT'S ALL FUTILE...?

HEH...







AH...

HE...
HE DID IT!

YABUKI'S STRATEGY TO CLOSE-IN HAS NOW BEEN RENDERED COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY MOOT!

AFTER ALL THOSE TRIES, RIKIISHI'S UPPERCUT FINALLY LANDS SQUARELY AT YABUKI'S CHIN!

THAT PUNCH MIGHT'VE BEEN IT FOR THIS MATCH...

4!

5!

3!

YABUKI'S DOWN!

RIKIISHI'S UPPERCUT FINALLY LANDED!

WELL...

WILL HE STAND!? CAN HE STAND!?

AHH! YABUKI'S STARTING TO RAISE HIS HEAD OFF THE GROUND!

JOE...!

JOE...

ズル…

6!

I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING MORE HE CAN DO...

EVEN IF HE WERE TO STAND,

ズル!

7!

AHH-

ズル

14

4

EVEN SO...

HE REFUSES TO GIVE UP!

YABUKI...

HE DID IT! YABUKI HAS MANAGED TO STAND BACK UP AGAIN!

J-JOE...

F-FIGHT ON!

A-ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

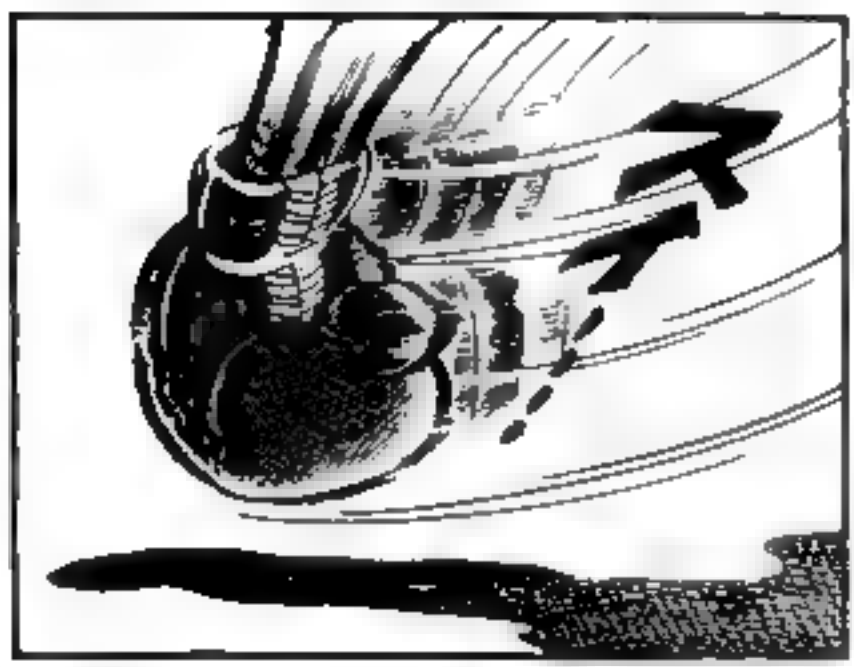
ドン!

BUT IT APPEARS HE CAN'T EVEN LOOK STRAIGHT AHEAD ANYMORE...!

YABUKI MAY HAVE MANAGED TO JUST BARELY STAND BACK UP,

ALL HE CAN DO IS WAVER RIGHT AND LEFT LIKE A DEAD-BEAT DRUNK!

NOT LETTING THIS CHANCE SLIP AWAY, RIKIISHI MERCILESSLY CLOSES IN FOR THE CRITICAL UPPERCUT!
AHH!


ヌ!!

BOKE!!

IF HE TAKES ONE MORE UPPERCUT, IT'S ALL OVER!
AGHHH!

ZAO
AHHH!
AH!
....

A-AMAZING!

I DON'T KNOW BUT HE CERTAINLY DOESN'T SEEM TO SHOW ANY SUCH SIGNS OF COMPLACENT CONFIDENCE ON HIS FACE. JUST TAKE A LOOK AT HIS GAZE.

DO YOU THINK IT WAS RIKIISHI'S SENSE OF CONFIDENCE THAT STOPPED HIM FROM SETTLING THE MATCH JUST NOW?

WHAT A SHOW OF DISCIPLINE BY RIKIISHI! HE STOPPED HIS UPPERCUT FROM LANDING LESS THAN AN CENTIMETER AWAY FROM JOE'S CHIN!

CONSIDERING HIS SWING STARTED BEFORE THE BELL RANG, THAT UPPERCUT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A FOUL EVEN IF IT HAD CONNECTED AFTER THE BELL...

HE WAS *LITERALLY* SAVED BY THE BELL JUST NOW.

TALK ABOUT LUCKY...

WOW...

IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE WERE A SCIENTIST COLDLY OBSERVING A SICK LAB RAT HE INOCULATED WITH A DISEASE...

HIS EYES ARE INTENTLY FOCUSED ON ANALYZING EVERY LAST ASPECT OF HIS WEAKENED OPPONENT.

LUCK HASN'T ABANDONED YOU JUST YET.

IT'S AS THE CROWD SAYS, JOE.

NEED... TO... RINSE...

MOUTH...

HAD RUNG JUST A SECOND LATER NO, EVEN HALF A SECOND LATER, THE MATCH WOULD'VE BEEN ALL OVER...

IF THAT BELL,

H-HERE.

LET'S CALL IT QUITS, JOE...

...

NOT ONLY THAT, IT'S A MOLAR, NORMALLY ONE OF THE TOUGHEST TOOTH.

ONE OF HIS TEETH FELL OUT...

YOU WERE NEVER ONE TO LISTEN TO SANE ADVICE.

WHO AM I KIDDING.

FIGHTING ANY MORE THAN THIS IS-

I THINK THIS MATCH HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH.

ACTUAL BOXING...?

FROM HEREON, I SUGGEST YOU TRY ACTUAL BOXING.

I THINK YOU'VE USED UP ALL YOUR LUCK FOR ONE DAY.

ALRIGHT, LISTEN UP.

AND FOR ATTACKS, YOU'LL ATTACK WITH THE TEXTBOOK JABS, FEINTS, STRAIGHTS, AND HOOKS.

YOU'LL ADOPT A STANCE WITH A PROPER GUARD.

BY THAT, I MEAN NO MORE NO-GUARD STANCES AND OTHER RECKLESS RUBBISH.

YEAH.

FIGHT WITH AN ORTHODOX APPROACH!

CAN YOU HEAR ME, JOE!?

IF EVEN THAT DOESN'T WORK, WE CAN AT LEAST GIVE UP KNOWING WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING.

JUST GIVE IT A SHOT.

I WAS ALSO THINKING MYSELF THAT I HAD NO OTHER CHOICE LEFT...

YEAH, I GOT YOU...

WELL, JOE? TELL ME IF YOU UNDERSTOOD OR NOT AT LEAST!

SECONDS OUT OF THE RING!

JOE! TRY TO REMEMBER!

THE ONE-TWO-THREES FOR TOMORROW!

BUT IT SEEMS RIKIISHI'S OVERWHELMING POWER AND SKILL HAS FORCED YABUKI TO ABANDON WHAT WAS NOT ONLY HIS TRADEMARK STYLE BUT ALSO HIS PRIDE AS WELL...!

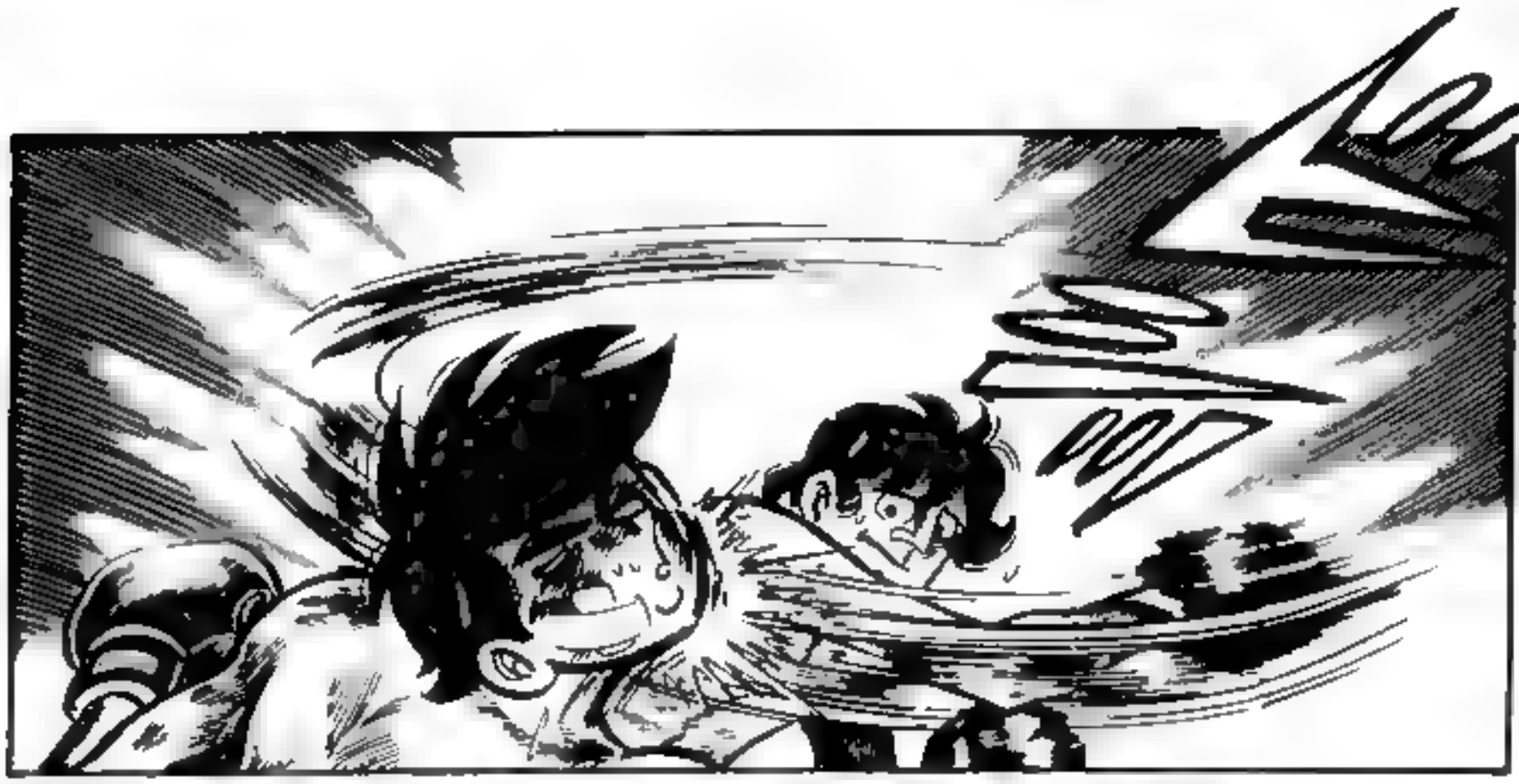
IT'S UNFORTUNATE,

AHH! YABUKI HAS ABANDONED HIS USUAL NO-GUARD STANCE!

I BELIEVE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER THAT HE'S ACTUALLY USED A GUARD!

THE ONE-TWO-THREES,

FOR TOMORROW, HUH...



THE ONLY THING YOU *CAN* AND *SHOULD* DO IS THAT NO-GUARD STANCE OF YOURS!

JUST GIVE IT UP, JOE! AIN'T NO GOOD'S GONNA COME FROM TRYING TO FIGHT ALL PROPER!

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IF YOUR NO-GUARD STYLE WON'T EVEN WORK, THEN RIKIISHI HAS YOU BEAT IN EVERY SINGLE WAY!

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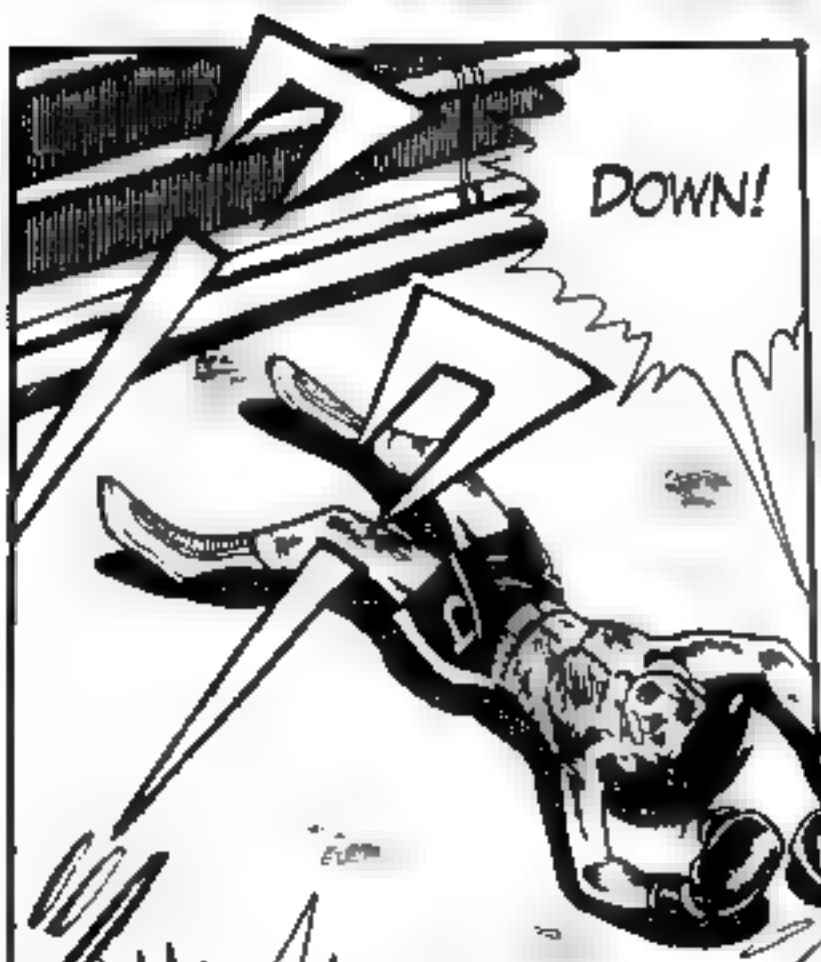
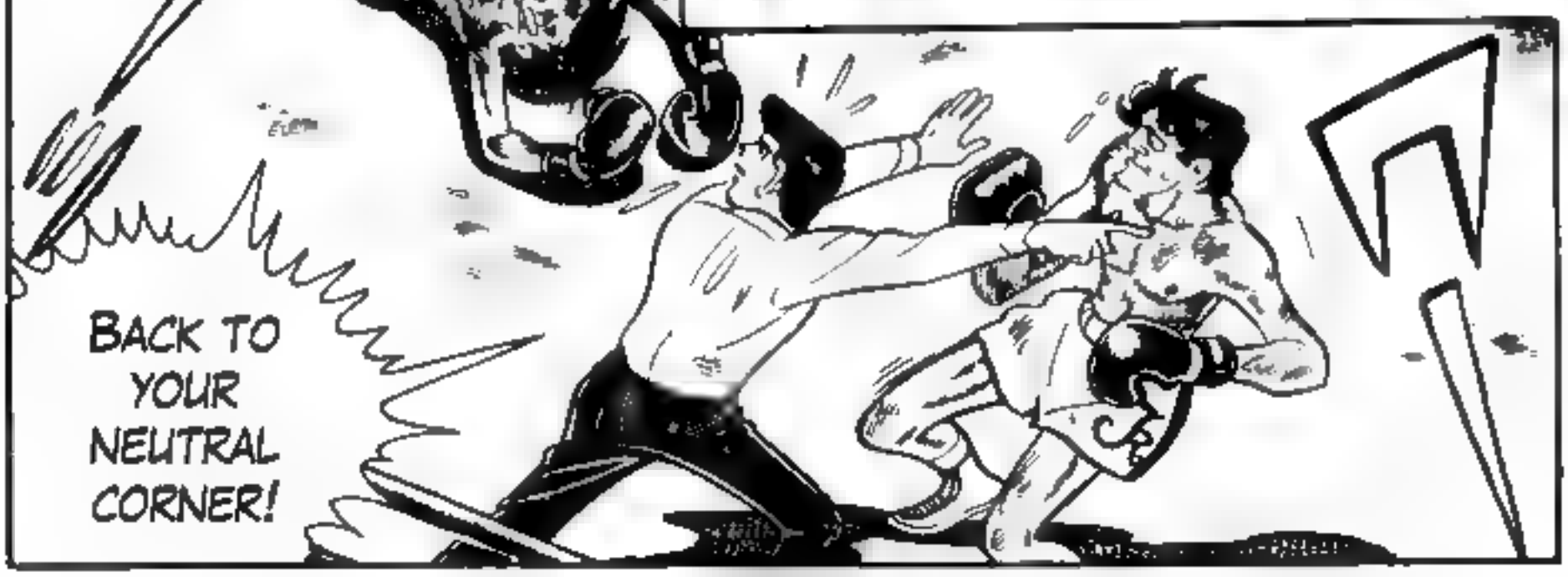
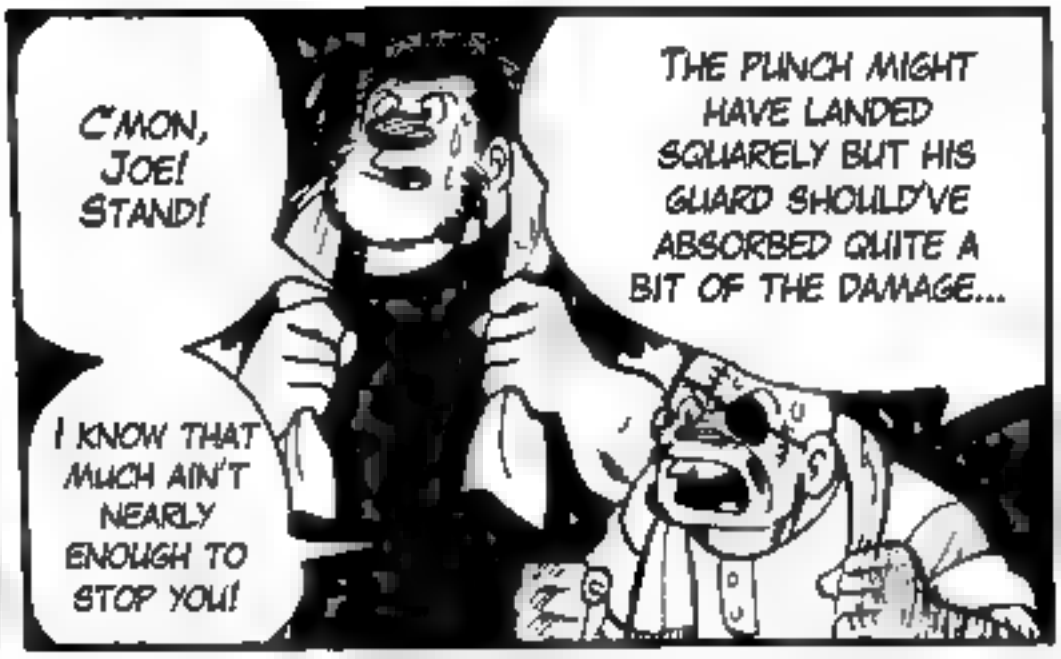

DOWN!


BACK TO
YOUR
NEUTRAL
CORNER!

3!!
2!
1!
I TOLD YA SO! THAT GUARD AIN'T GONNA DO YOU GOOD AT ALL!
YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST HASTILY SLAP ON A GUARD WHEN YOU'VE NEVER USED IT AND HOPE IT'LL BLOCK RIKIISHI!?
OH MAN, LOOKS LIKE IT'S OVER FOR GOOD THIS TIME.
6!
5!
4!
IF... IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT GUARD, THAT UPPERCUT WOULD'VE FINISHED HIM OFF FOR SURE...
HE'S STILL WANTS TO STAND!?
WHA...

B!


C'MON, JOE! STAND!
I KNOW THAT MUCH AIN'T NEARLY ENOUGH TO STOP YOU!
THE PUNCH MIGHT HAVE LANDED SQUARELY BUT HIS GUARD SHOULD'VE ABSORBED QUITE A BIT OF THE DAMAGE...

WIPE YOUR GLOVES FIRST!
WAIT!

ALRIGHT, FIGHT ON!

ドゴ!!

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YEAH, AND SOME OF'EM ARE EVEN CONNECTING!

NOT ONLY IS HE STANDING, HE'S STILL DISHING IT OUT!

I'D HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS A MIRACLE A PERSON COULD STAND AFTER TAKING THOSE TWO STRONG UPPERCUTS BUT...

L-LOOK...

INVINCIBLE?

HE'S INVINCIBLE...

MAY-BE...

WHAT IS HE, INVINCIBLE?

HE'S STILL FIGHTING OUT THERE DESPITE TAKING SO MUCH DAMAGE... HIS ABILITY TO BOUNCE BACK IS ALMOST INHUMAN...!

INCREDIBLE...

IN...

IN MY OPINION, HE HAS YET TO RECOVER AND IS MERELY SWINGING HIS FISTS OUT THERE WITH SHEER DETER-MINATION ALONE..

NO, I THINK YOU'RE MAKING TOO MUCH OUT FROM HIM.

INVINCIBLE

INVINCIBLE

INVINCIBLE

HIS GLOVES ARE SLOWLY DROPPING LOWER AND LOWER IN EXHAUSTION!

YOU'RE RIGHT.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

YOU CAN SEE HIS FEET SLOWING DOWN AND HIS EYES SLOWLY SHUTTING.

NOT ONLY THAT, HE SEEMS TOO TIRED TO EVEN KEEP UP HIS GUARD ANYMORE...

NGH!

AND YET HIS WILLPOWER FORCES HIM TO DRIVE ON!

IT MUST BE HELL TRYING TO EVEN KEEP HIS ARMS UP,

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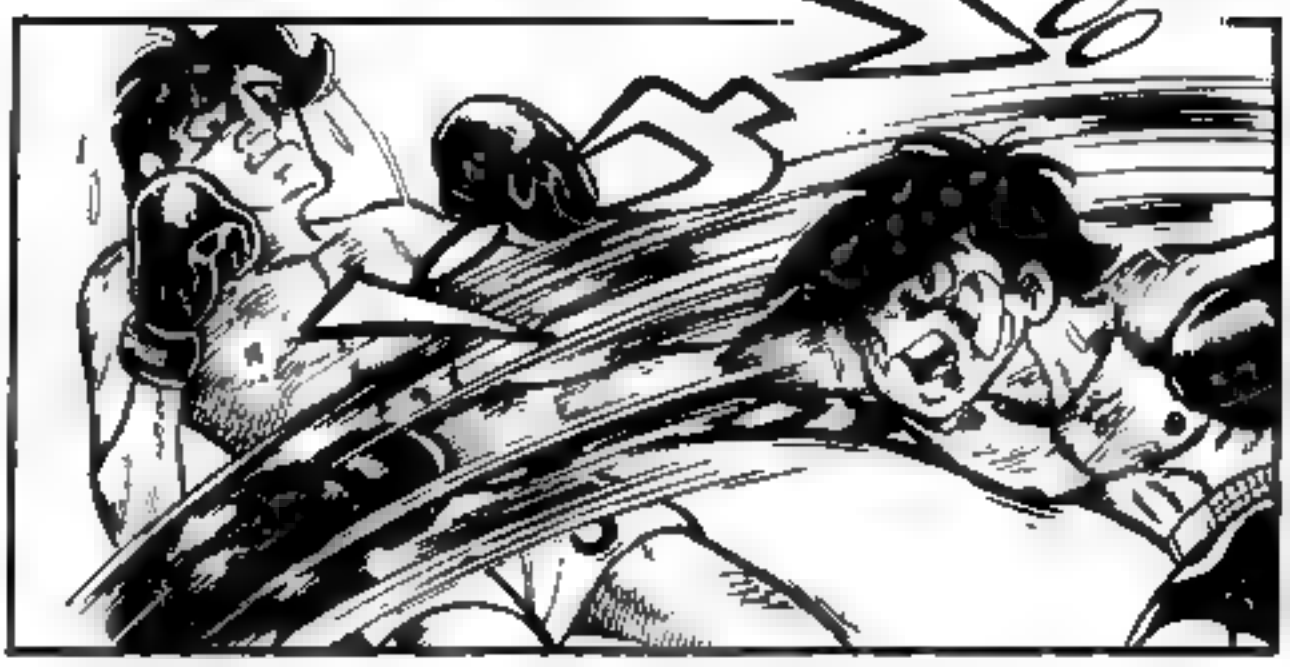
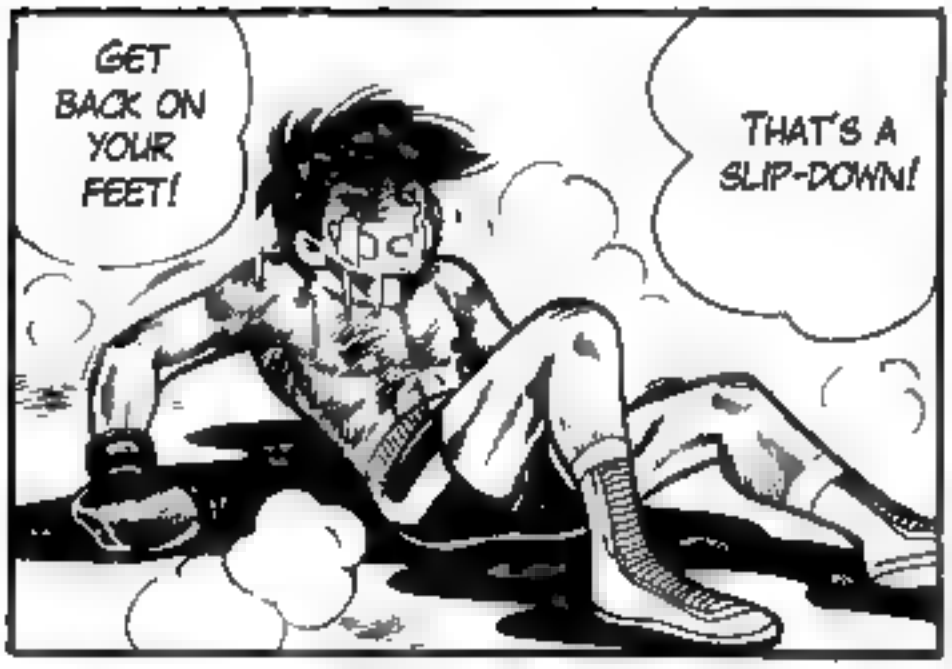
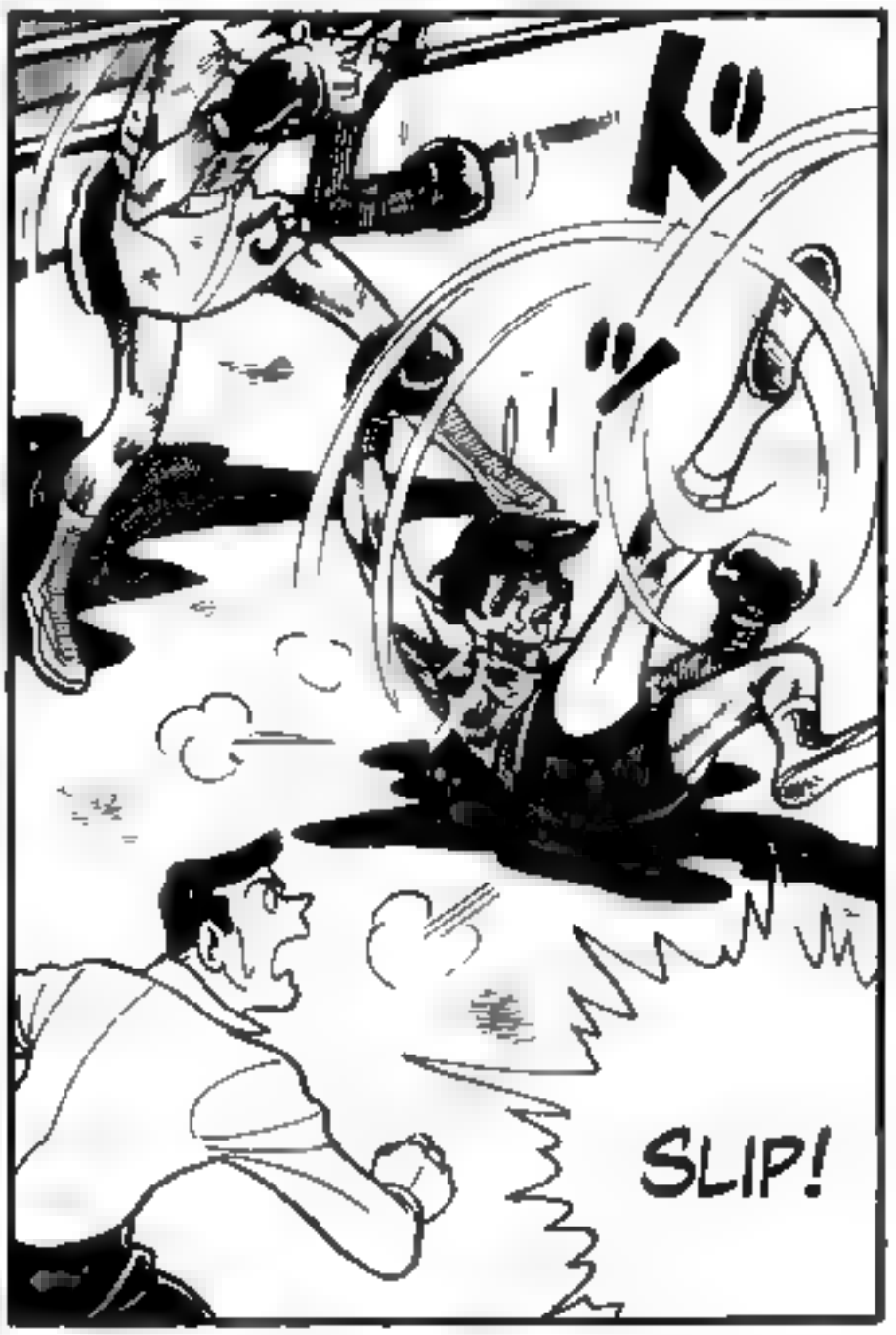



GET BACK ON YOUR FEET!
THAT'S A SLIP-DOWN!


K"
SLIP!

WHOO.
AWWW...

FIGHT ON!

THAT'S THE END OF ROUND 5!

YABUKI APPEARS TO BE WAVERING BETWEEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND UNCONSCIOUSNESS!

NISHI, GO GET WATER TO DUMP ON HIM!

HUHUHU

HANG IN THERE, JOE!

SBC

BUT IF I WERE THE REFEREE, I WOULD'VE STOPPED THE MATCH THEN AND THERE AND DECLARED RIKIISHI AS THE WINNER.

IT'S TRUE THAT YABUKI *DID* MANAGE TO STAND UP BEFORE THE COUNTDOWN FINISHED,

IN MY OPINION, THE MATCH EFFECTIVELY ENDED BY ROUND 4.

YES, ABSOLUTELY.

WOULD YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT LETTING YABUKI FIGHT ANY FURTHER WOULD BE *PURE* RECKLESSNESS?

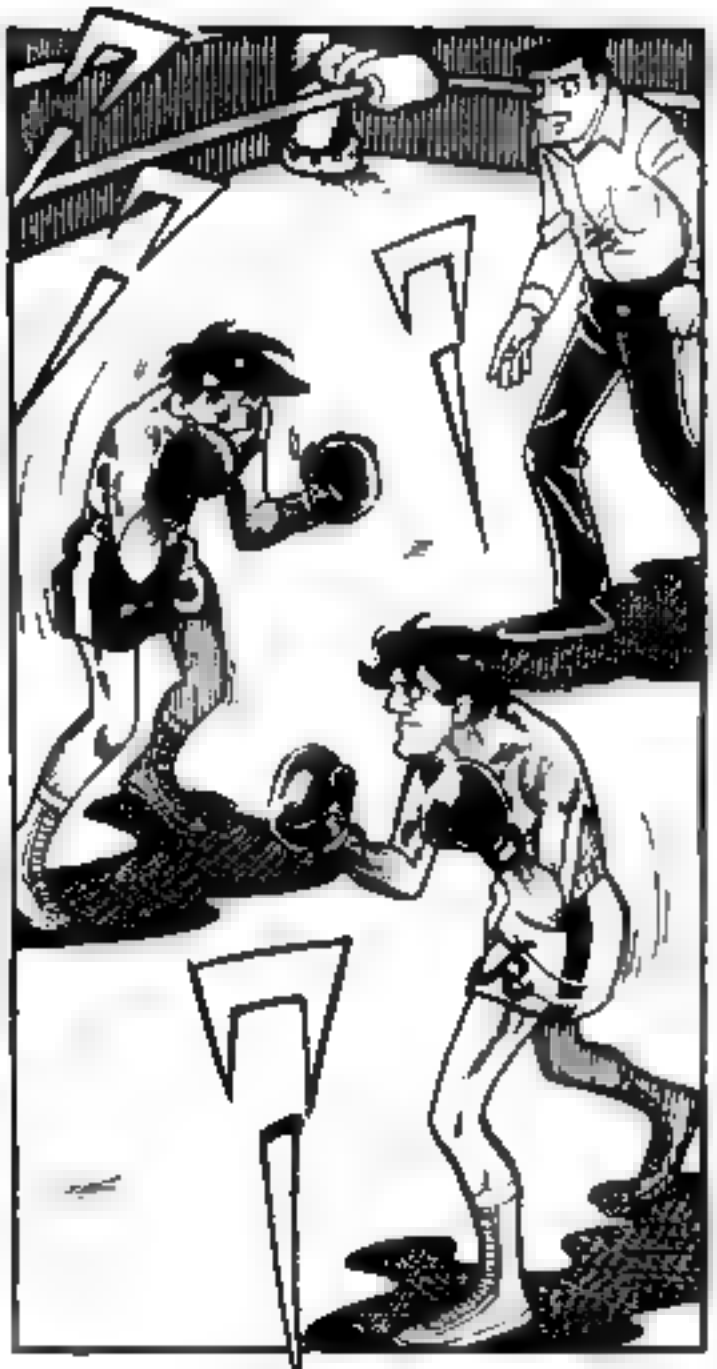
NEVERTHELESS, THE BELL RUNG ONCE MORE,

AND THE 6TH ROUND WAS UNDERWAY.

THROW IN THE TOWEL ALREADY!
ARE YOU JUST GONNA WATCH UNTIL YOUR VERY OWN PLAYER GETS KILLED OUT THERE!?
O-OLD MAN...
HOW CRUEL COULD YOU BE!?
HEY COACH! DON'T YOU THINK HE'S HAD ENOUGH!?

SOO

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF



SOO

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIME JOE FALLS, HE STILL GETS RIGHT BACK UP AND CONTINUES PUNCHING AWAY...
BUT...

KO

IT'S OBVIOUS TO EVERYONE THAT THIS MATCH IS OVER SO JUST END IT!
EVEN RIKIISHI LOOKS BORED TO TEARS BY NOW!
STOP THE MATCH ALREADY, REF!

HE'S STILL FIGHTING HIS HEART OUT AGAINST RIKIISHI...

SO FINISH HIM OFF ALREADY, RIKIISHI!

YES, HE SEEMS QUITE EXHAUSTED AS WELL. WITH THE EXTREME WEIGHT-LOSS HE'S WENT THROUGH RECENTLY, I FEAR HIS STAMINA HAS REACHED A LIMIT...

DESPITE THE CROWD'S YELLING, I DON'T BELIEVE RIKIISHI'S PURPOSELY DRAGGING ON THIS MATCH BECAUSE HE WANTS TO...

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, RIKIISHI!? HURRY UP AND END THIS ALREADY!

FIGHT ON!

IT'S PRACTICALLY CRIMINAL TO KEEP YOUR OPPONENT SUFFERING FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, YOU KNOW!

B-BUT I DOUBT A LUCKY HIT LIKE THAT WOULD...

LOOK! SEE THAT!? HE LANDED ANOTHER PUNCH! THIS FIGHT'S NOT OVER YET!

HIS SWING DIPPED UP AT THE LAST MOMENT AND MANAGED TO CATCH RIKIISHI RIGHT ON THE TEMPLE OF HIS HEAD!

AHH! YABUKI SWINGS WILDLY AND GETS IN A BIG PUNCH!

OHH...

ドガッ

ドゴッ

AH-

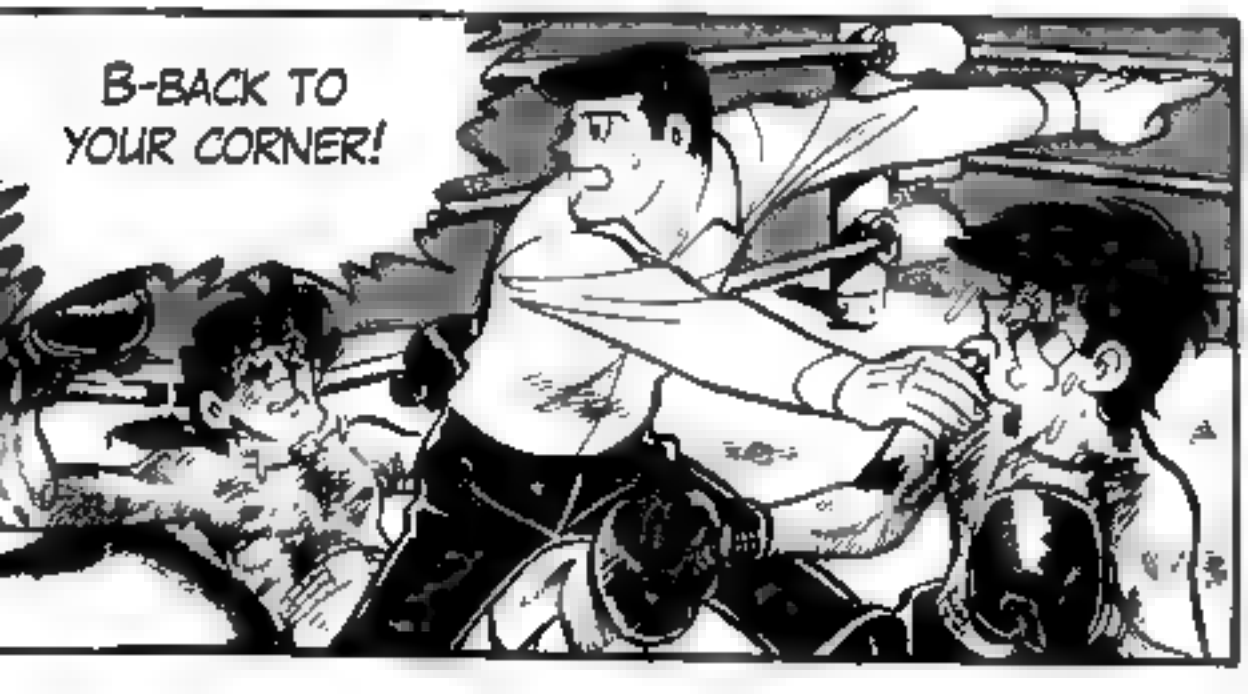
AGHH!

RIKIISHI!

ズーン

I REPEAT! RIKIISHI HAS GONE DOWN!
R-RIKIISHI IS DOWN!

AHHHH!
AGHHH!


B-BACK TO YOUR CORNER!

3!

4!

5!

6!

7!

8!

9...

I'M... I'M FINE...

I CAN STILL FIGHT.

O-OLD MAN...!

DON'T WASTE THIS CHANCE! PUMMEL HIM!

C'MON, JOE!

I WONDER IF THAT AWKWARD LANDING MAY HAVE CAUSED SOME SORT OF CONCUSSION?

RIKIISHI SHAKES HIS HEAD AND SLOWLY STANDS BACK UP...

AFTER FALLING IN A RATHER AWKWARD WAY,

AH-

AHH!

FIGHT O-

WHAT THE...

AHHHH!

R-RIKIISHI'S SWITCHED TO MY SPECIALTY!? THE NO-GUARD STANCE!?

AHHH!

HE'S...!

WHAT IN THE WORLD ...!?

I SUPPOSE THAT IS POSSIBLE...
WELL...
HAS CAUSED SOME SORT OF PUNCH DRUNK SYNDROME AFFECTING RIKIISHI'S ABILITY TO THINK PROPERLY...!?
D-DO YOU THINK THAT MAYBE THAT AWKWARD LANDING JUST NOW,

RIKIISHI HAS ADOPTED THE NO-GUARD STANCE THAT HIS VERY FOE IS FAMOUS FOR!
CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS SCENE!?

OH NO...

IT MIGHT BE THAT HE'S AIMING FOR A TRIPLE CROSS-COUNTER, MUCH LIKE THE ONE YABUKI USED TO KNOCK OUT WOLF KANAGUSHI...

BUT AS THE COURSE OF THIS MATCH HAS SO FAR PROVEN, RIKIISHI KNOWS INSIDE OUT HOW YABUKI FIGHTS.

SON OF A...!

YOU...

R-RIKIISHI...

JOE! DON'T YOU DARE CLOSE IN ON HIM NOW! STOOOOP!

YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME AT MY OWN GAME!?

AIMING FOR THE SAME EXACT THING YOU DID TO WOLF!

RIKIISHI IS...

NGH...

YOU'LL BE KILLED ON THAT SPOT FOR SURE!

IMAGINE TAKING A TRIPLE CROSS-COUNTER FROM *RIKIISHI*!

UGH...

WHOA...

AH-

MNN...

スススス

HEH...

GET AWAY FROM ME!

T-THIS AIN'T NO JOKE...

AGHH,

STOP PISSING YOUR PANTS AND GET A GRIP!

WHAT'S WRONG, JOE!?

HUFF HUFF

HAHAHAHA!

AHAHAHAHA!

HEY RIKIISHI! WITH THAT SKELETON-LIKE BODY AND THAT STANCE, YOU LOOK JUST LIKE A REAL GHOST!

YOU REALLY ARE THE SCARIEST PERSON I'VE EVER HAD TO FIGHT, RIKIISHI...

HONESTLY,

JUST WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO DO AGAINST THIS...?

THIS AIN'T NO LAUGHING MATTER...!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME... I CAN'T BELIEVE THE NOTORIOUS BRAWLER JOE IS SCARED OUT OF HIS WITS HERE.

DAMMIT...

.....

AGHH!

IS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE OF ALL MY FIGHTS UP UNTIL NOW...

THIS SITUATION,

NOW I SEE WHAT ALL MY OPPONENTS HAD TO GO THROUGH...

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE TO THREATEN MY OPPONENTS WITH A KO BLOW WITH MY TRADEMARK NO-GUARD STANCE...

THAT'S IT!

I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING SOON OR ELSE...

C-CRAP...

AHH!

ゴーカイ

Y-YABUKI HAS SWITCHED TO THE NO-GUARD STANCE AS WELL...!

OHHH!

AH!

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE FINALLY ON EQUAL GROUNDS.

HEH HEH... NOW WHAT, RIKIISHI?

I KNEW YOUR INSTINCT WOULD GUIDE YOU TO THE BEST CHOICE WHEN BACKED INTO A CORNER!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU SHOULD DO!

T-THAT'S IT, JOE!

THIS MATCH HAS GOTTEN EVEN MORE INTERESTING!

OH LORDY, A BATTLE OF NO-GUARD STANCES!?

THE 6TH ROUND CAME TO AN END,

WITH THE RING OF THE BELL,

AND WITH ONE MORE RING, THE 7TH ROUND WAS SET TO BEGIN.

COULD ONLY NERVOUSLY GLARE AT EACH OTHER, AND NEITHER DARED TO MOVE A MUSCLE.

HOWEVER, THE TWO PLAYERS STANDING AT THE CENTER OF THE RING,

SO WHOEVER MAKES THE FIRST MOVE MAY VERY WELL BE THE ONE TO GO DOWN!

AS THE NAME IMPLIES, A COUNTER IS ABOUT COUNTERING YOUR OPPONENT.

IT'S NOT THAT THEY'RE NOT MOVING, BUT THAT THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO MOVE.

THEY'RE BOTH WAITING FOR THE OTHER TO MAKE A MOVE FIRST!

NEITHER BOXER IS MOVING...

DAMN IT...

PISS OFF, YOU STUPID REF...

THAT WHOEVER MOVES FIRST IS GOING TO GET THE FULL BRUNT OF A TRIPLE CROSS-COUNTER? OR ARE YOU TELLING US TO FIGHT IN SPITE OF THAT...?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS,

C-COME ON! FIGHT, YOU TWO!

I SAID FIGHT!

WOULD BE REDUCED TO A STARING CONTEST...

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT THIS FIGHT OF SWEAT, BLOOD, AND TEARS,

THERE'S NO ONE *MORE* SICK OF JUST STANDING AROUND THAN I AM.

HMPH.

YES... AND THAT'S EXACTLY HOW WOLF WAS KNOCKED OUT WITH A FRACTURED JAW...

IN THE MATCH BETWEEN YABUKI AND WOLF, I BELIEVE IT WAS WOLF WHO MADE THE FIRST MOVE...

SO DON'T TELL ME TO JUST FIGHT ON WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING ANYTHING, YOU RETARDED REF!

BUT I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES!

IT'LL BE YABUKI WHO'LL MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

I'M SURE...

CONSIDERING ALL THAT, IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY NEITHER BOXER RIGHT NOW ARE WILLING TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

NOT ONLY THAT, THE DAMAGE TO HIS JAW WAS SO SEVERE IT FORCED HIM INTO EARLY RETIREMENT.

I'M BEGGING YOU, DON'T YOU DARE RAISE YOUR HANDS BEFORE HIM...

DON'T MOVE, JOE...

PLEASE...

I'M SURE RIKIISHI'S NO-GUARD STRATEGY WAS PLANNED TAKING YABUKI'S SHORT TEMPER AND IMPATIENCE INTO ACCOUNT.

YES, I THINK SO TOO...

ガヤガヤ

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THE FIGHT WAS GETTING GOOD, BOTH OF THEM STOPPED MOVING...

WHAT THE...

レイシ

SO COME AT ME ALREADY...

THE REF'S TELLING YOU TO FIGHT, RIKIISHI...

I SAID FIGHT ON!

F-FIGHT!

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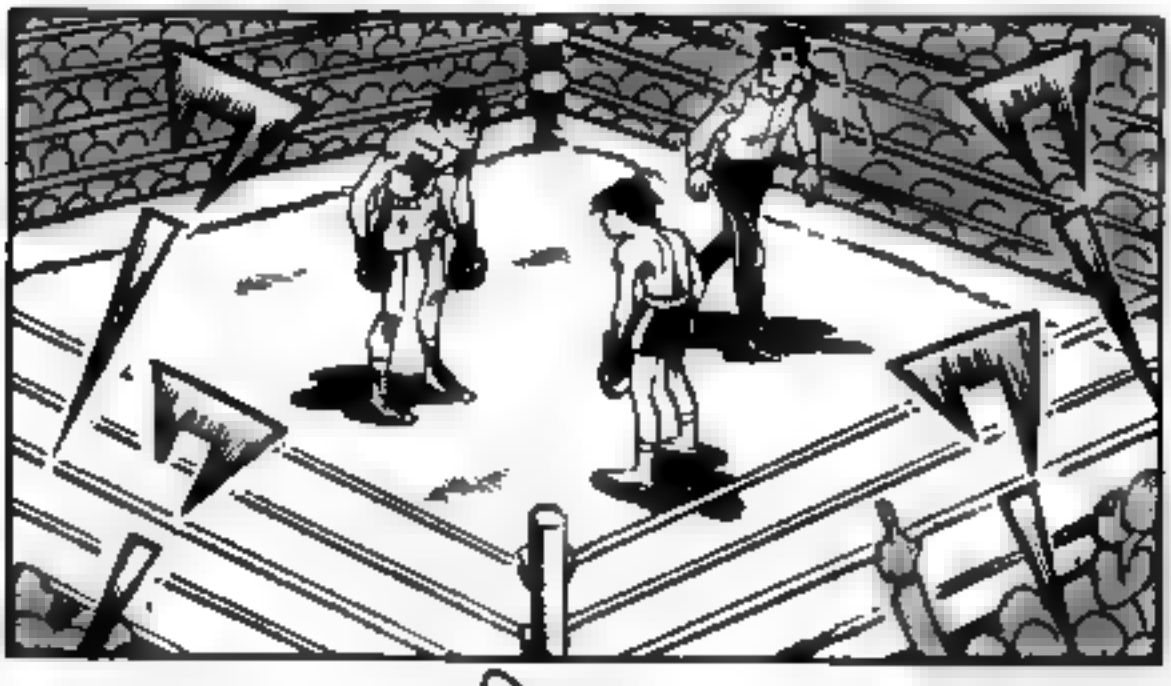
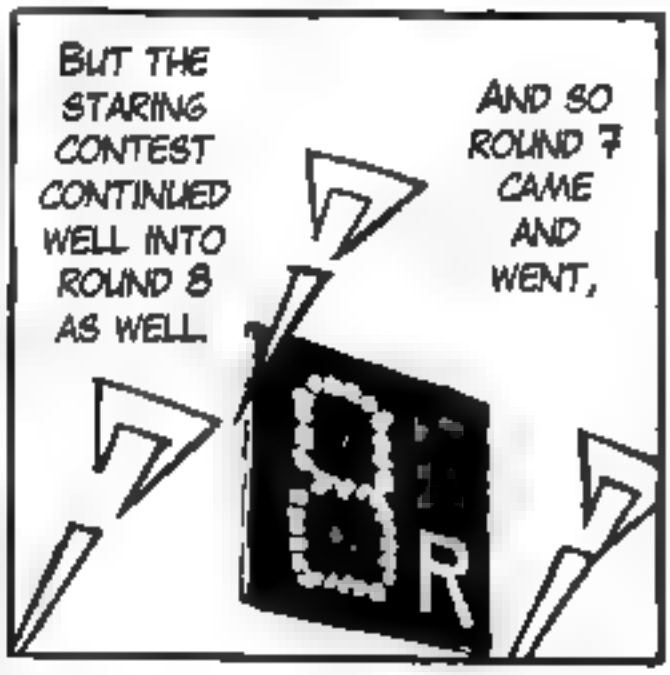
I'M BEGGING YOU, JUST FIGHT!

...

OH JEEZ...




BUT THE STARING CONTEST CONTINUED WELL INTO ROUND 8 AS WELL
AND SO ROUND 7 CAME AND WENT,
R

THE CROWD IS BEGINNING TO BECOME IMPATIENT AS WELL...!
THE FIGHT CAN'T CONTINUE AT THIS RATE...

I DON'T CARE WHO, BUT ONE OF YOU JUST RAISE A FIST ALREADY!
FIGHT!
FIGHT!

THIS IS THE FINAL ROUND YOU KNOW! THE LAST FLIPPING ROUND, YOU HEAR!
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, HOW LONG DO YOU TWO PLAN TO KEEP THIS UP!?

I'M SURE ALL THIS YELLING IS ONLY GOING TO PROVOKE JOE WHO HAS THE SHORTER PATIENCE...

T-THIS ISN'T GOOD...

A CON!

THIS IS FRAUD!

YES...

I WANT MY MONEY BACK, YOU FAKE-ASS BOXERS!

WE PAID GOOD MONEY TO SEE A FIGHT, NOT A STARING CONTEST!

I WANT A DAMN REFUND!

AND WHERE I COME FROM, A FIGHT IS SOMETHING YOU DO BY SWINGING YOUR FISTS, NOT BY ADMIRING SOMEONE'S FACE!

NO, YOU SHUT UP! THIS TICKET ENTITLES US TO SEE A REAL FIGHT, NOT A GODDAMN STARING CONTEST!

SO SHUT YOUR DAMN MOUTHS ALREADY!

YOU THINK THAT LITTLE TICKET OF YOURS ENTITLES YOU TO PUT A BOXER'S CAREER AND ENTIRE LIFE AT RISK!?

FANS, MY ASS! IF YOU DON'T QUIT YOUR WHINING, I'M GONNA PUT MY FOOT UP YOUR SELF-ENTITLED ASS!

IS THAT WHAT YOU SAY TO THE FANS WHO SUPPORT THIS WHOLE SPORT!?

WHAT DID YOU SAY!?

SHUT UP! ALL YOU RETARDS WHO THINK A KO IS ALL THERE IS TO BOXING SHOULD GET THE HELL OUT OF THIS STADIUM THIS INSTANT!

THAT'S RIGHT!

IT'S OBVIOUS RIKIISHI'LL WIN BY POINTS WHEN THIS ROUND ENDS, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YABUKI'S PERFECTLY FINE WITH THAT!

WHAT PISSES ME OFF THE MOST IS HOW COWARDLY THAT YABUKI JOE IS!

O-OLD MAN... YOU GETTING ALL RILED UP TOO ISN'T HELPING EITHER...

S-SORRY...

DOES YOUR UNBROKEN KO STREAK MEAN NOTHING TO YOU!?

DO YOU NOT CARE ABOUT LOSING AS LONG AS YOU DON'T GET HURT, IS THAT IT!?

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I WAS WRONG!

I WOULD'VE THOUGHT YABUKI OUT OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD'VE HAD ENOUGH BALLS TO RISK DANGER TO SNATCH VICTORY FROM THE JAWS OF DEFEAT!

IT'S THAT MOUTHY BASTARD AGAIN...!

O-OLD MAN!

THAT DOES IT, I OUGHTA-

GO HOME AND HIDE UNDERNEATH YOUR SHEETS WITH YOUR LIL' TEDDY BEAR! AIN'T NO WAY BIG BAD RIKIISHI CAN HURT YOU THERE!

THAT'S ENOUGH, YOU COWARD! JUST GO HOME ALREADY!

AHAHAHA!

WHAT, YOU WANT TO START SOMETHING!?

THEN I WILL!

I WARNED YOU! IF YOU CAN'T CLOSE YOUR OWN DAMN MOUTH,

GET 'IM!

S-STOP FIGHTING!

OWW! AGHHH!

SECURITY! HELP!

THEY'RE RIGHT...

WHEN THE BELL RINGS, IT'LL BE MY LOSS...

LIGH!

ALTHOUGH THE RING IS DROP-DEAD SILENT, IT'S A PANDEMONIUM UP IN THE STANDS!

WHAT A TURN OF EVENTS!

IN THE MATCH WITH WOLF, HE DID MAKE THE FIRST MOVE BUT THE REAL REASON WHY HE LOST WAS THAT HE WAS TOO SLOW TO LAND HIS DOUBLE CROSS-COUNTER... BUT I'M DIFFERENT FROM HIM. I KNOW MY CROSS-COUNTERS ARE QUICKER THAN WOLF'S...

WAIT A SEC...

AS ARROGANT AS IT MIGHT SOUND, I KNOW MY CROSS-COUNTERS ARE ON ANOTHER LEVEL THAN HIS...

THAT'S RIGHT...

SO IGNORE THEM AND THEIR WORTHLESS BLATHER!

EVEN IF YOU IMPRESS THE FANS BY GIVING'EM WHAT THEY WANT, NOT A SINGLE ONE WILL BOTHER TO THROW YOU A FLOWER WHEN YOU'RE LAYING FLAT ON THE RING FLOOR! THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS!

DON'T YOU DARE MAKE THE FIRST MOVE!

J-JOE!

IF I CAN MOVE QUICKLY ENOUGH TO LAND MY DOUBLE CROSS-COUNTER FIRST,

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN THERE MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH TIME FOR RIKIISHI TO PULL A TRIPLE CROSS-COUNTER...

LET'S DO THIS THEN...

THEN EVEN IN THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO, HIS COUNTER WOULD HAVE LOST ALL MOMENTUM TO DELIVER ANY REAL DAMAGE...

HERE I COME!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO DO!

NO, YOU IDIOT!

IT'S A FIERCE LEFT STRAIGHT!

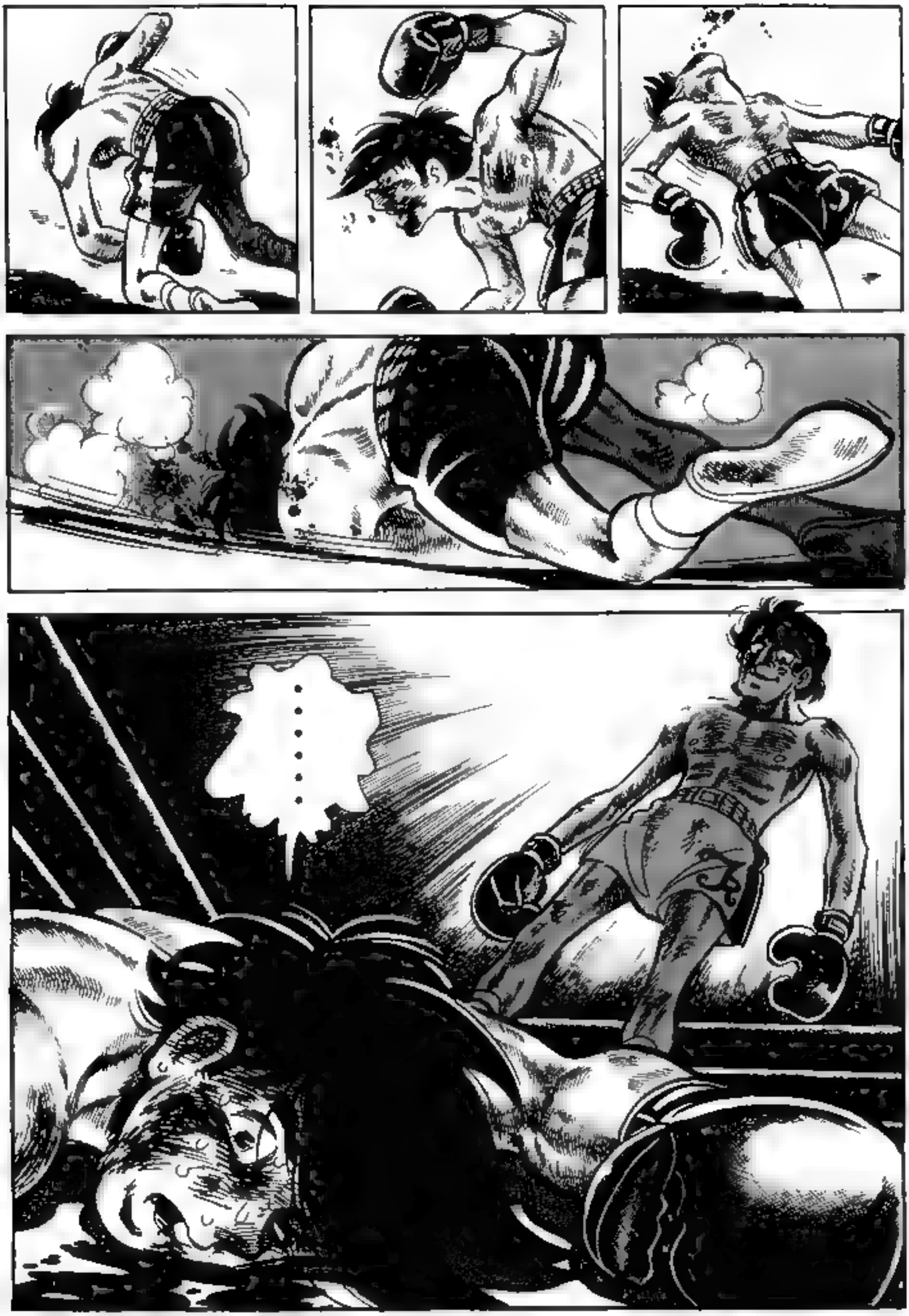
AHH! YABUKI MOVES FIRST!

BLOCK THE COUNTER AND...

HERE HE COMES ...!

END IT WITH MY DOUBLE CROSS-COUNTER!

AH-



IT'S OVER...

HE...

HE DID IT...

ALL OVER AT LAST...

IT'S...

R-RIGHT!

HURRY UP AND BEGIN THE COUNTDOWN!

D-DON'T JUST STAND THERE, REF!

BACK TO YOUR CORNER!

ズン

AH!

6!

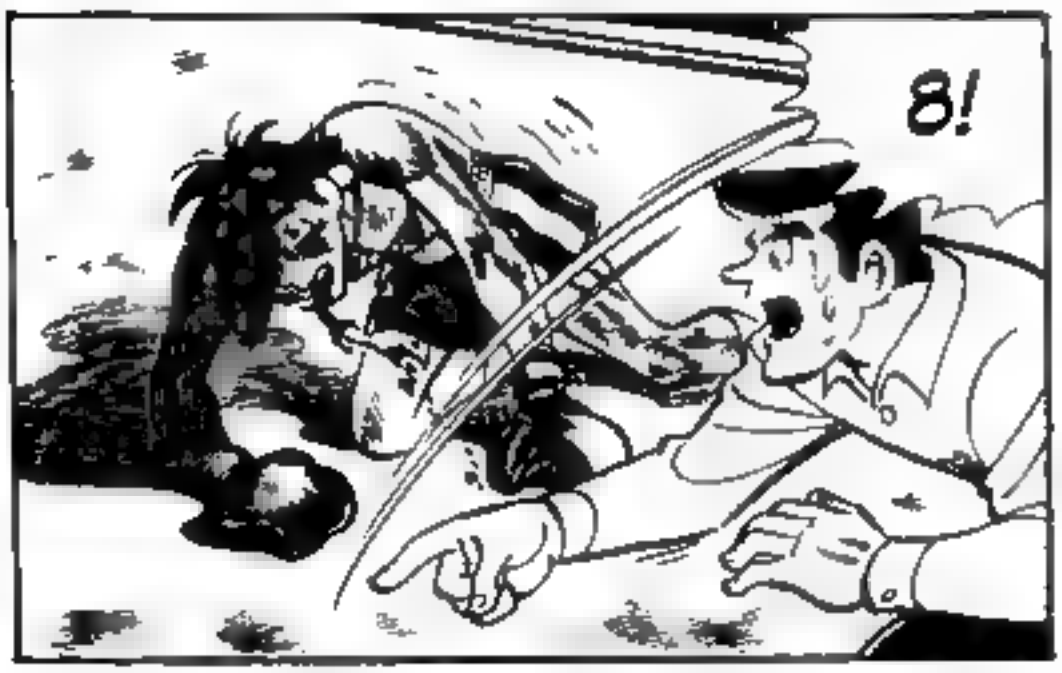
....

3!

5!

4!

ゴロ


8!

NGH...

9!
はあはあはあ

10!

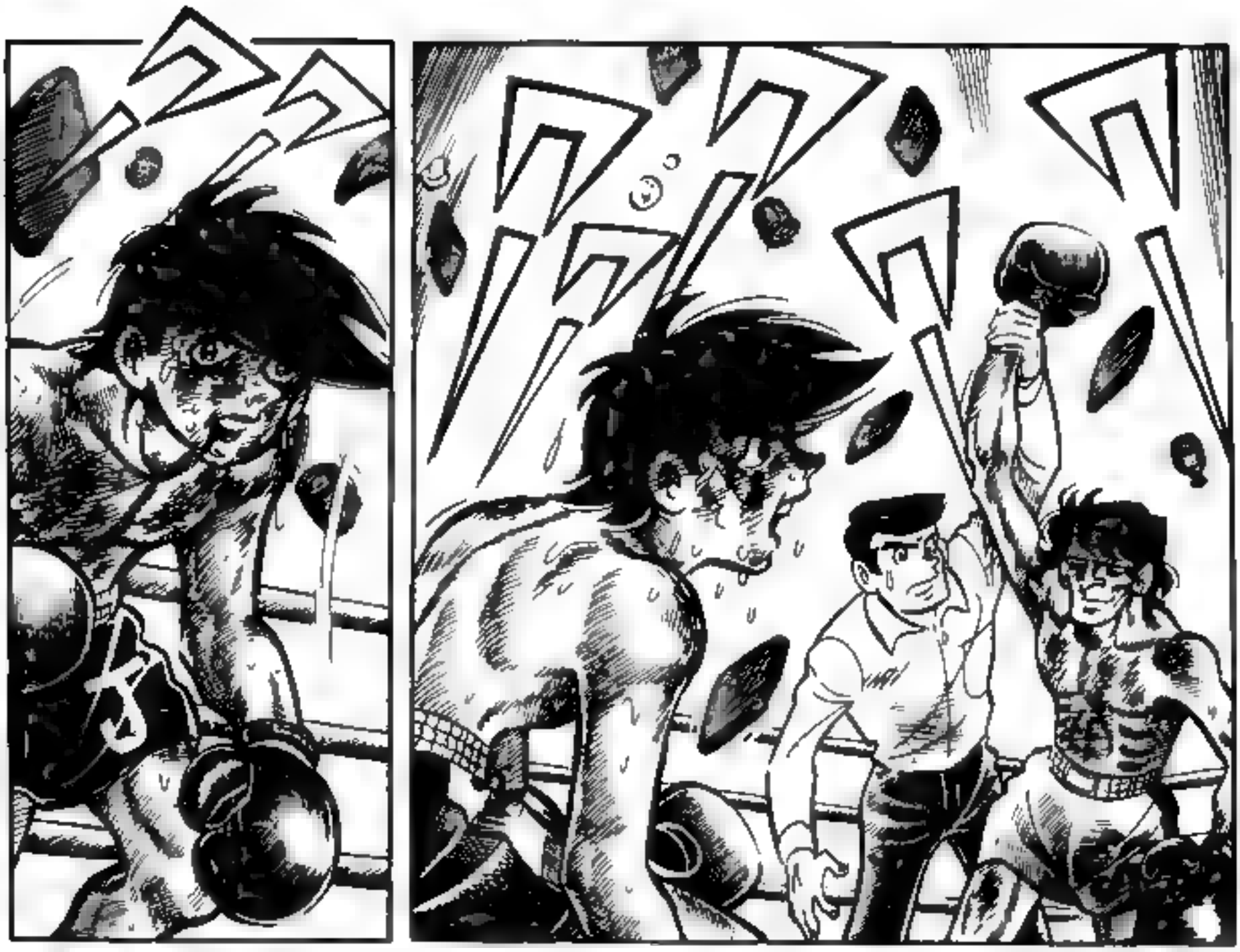
R-RIKIISHI!

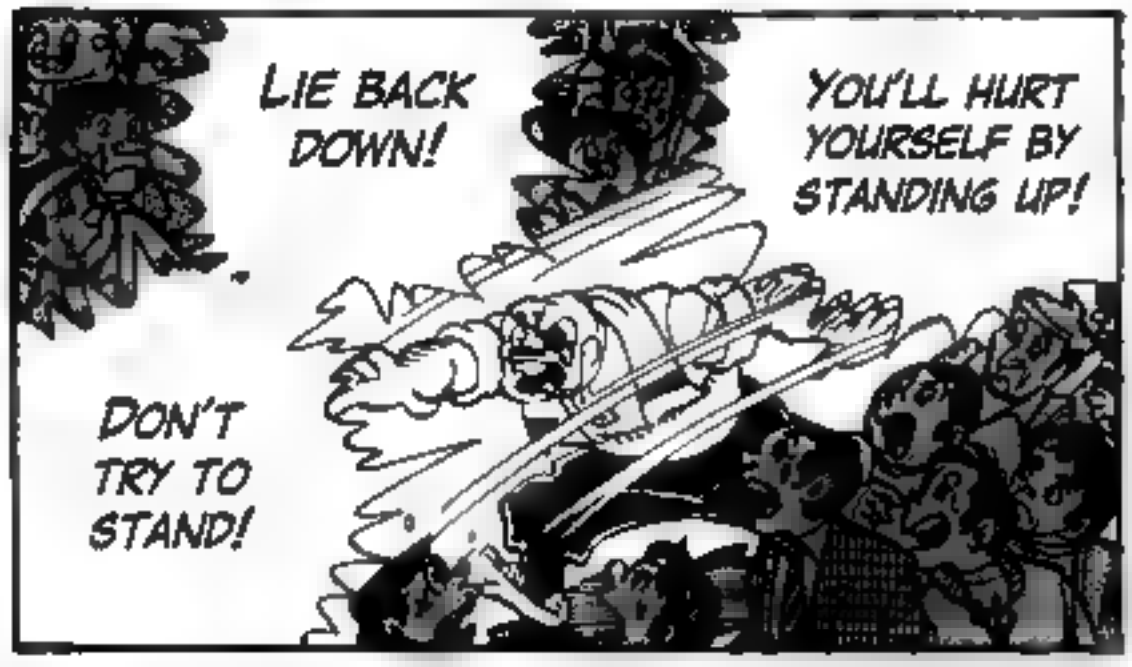
UGH...

WHAT'S WRONG?

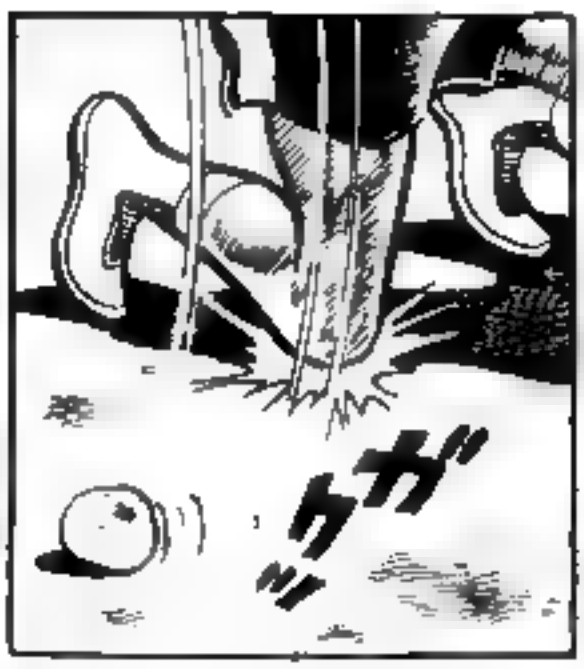
I SAID YOU'RE THE WINNER!

COME,




LIE BACK DOWN!
YOU'LL HURT YOURSELF BY STANDING UP!
DON'T TRY TO STAND!

JOE!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SOMEBODY GET A DOCTOR!

DOCTOR!

MY PLAYER NEEDS URGENT MEDICAL ASSISTANCE!

K"

HANG IN THERE, JOE!

JOE...!

CON-GRA-TULA-TIONS!

LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED YOUR GOAL AT LAST.

YOU DID IT, RIKIISHI...

PLEASE KEEP QUIET, SIR! MOVING HIM NOW IS TOO DANGEROUS!

JOE... JOE! JOOOOOEEEEE!

COME ON, THEN!

THERE'LL BE A GREAT CELEBRATION PARTY FOR YOU WAITING AT MY HOME WHEN WE RETURN.

NOW LET'S RETURN TO THE DRESSING ROOM.

SOMEBODY BRING THE STRETCHER!

SBC

THE MATCH FINALLY COMES TO AN END WITH A SPECTACULAR KO FINISH THAT IS SURE TO BE REMEMBERED IN BOXING HISTORY..!

2 MINUTES AND 47 SECONDS INTO THE FINAL ROUND,

I REPEAT! DO NOT THROW ANYTHING ONTO THE RING!

PLEASE STOP THROWING ANY OBJECTS ONTO THE RING!

I'VE SEEN MANY A MATCH IN ALL MY YEARS AS A COMMENTATOR,

I...

BUT TRULY, NONE WERE AS GRAND AS THE ONE I WITNESSED NOW.

.....

RIKIISHI TOORU HAS BROUGHT AN END TO YABUKI'S UNDEFEATED RECORD!

DESPITE UNDERGOING SEVERE WEIGHT-LOSS IN PREPARATION FOR THIS MATCH,

THOUGH IT'S NOT ENTIRELY UNEXPECTED. AFTER 8 WHOLE ROUNDS, I'M SURE HE'S AS FATIGUED AS A MAN CAN POSSIBLY BE.

YES,

RIKIISHI'S EXPRESSION SEEMS RATHER STRANGE...

ARE YOU FEELING UNWELL?

WHAT'S WRONG?

I'M FINE.

NO...

JUST A LITTLE DIZZY, THAT'S ALL...

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM TOUCHING HIM RIGHT NOW.

SIR!

ARE YOU AWAKE, JOE!?

AH, HIS EYES OPENED!

GIVE ME A MOMENT... TO REST...

COULD YOU...

JOE...

NO WAIT! YOU CAN'T MOVE RIGHT NOW!

K-!

STOP! YOUR INJURIES WILL WORSEN IF YOU DO!

THE MATCH IS OVER! DO YOU HEAR ME!?

DID YOU FORGET YOU WERE KNOCKED OUT?

J-JOE...

PUNCH

MOVE...

ZE

DIDN'T THINK... YOU'D GET ME WITH AN UPPERCUT AT THAT LAST MOMENT...

R... REAL IMPRESSED, RIKIISHI...

HEH HEH

I ADMIT DEFEAT.

THAT'S JUST LIKE THE RIKIISHI I KNOW..

WE NEED A DOCTOR OVER HERE TOO!

DOCTOR!

RIKISHI...

RIKIISHI!

AHH!

RAISE HIS HEAD BACK UP! HIS HEAD!

NO FLASHES! I SAID NO FLASHES!

PLEASE STOP PUSHING OR WE CAN'T PERFORM A MEDICAL EXAMINATION!

NOW THAT YOU'VE CONCEDED DEFEAT, LET'S RETURN TO THE DRESSING ROOM.

JOE...

RIGHT...

WITH THAT BODY AND SUNKEN EYES OF HIS...

CAN'T BELIEVE HE MANAGED TO FIGHT,

I...

WHAT A GUY.

YES... IT TRULY WAS A MATCH TO REMEMBER!
BUT IS COLLAPSED ON THE RING WHILE HIS DEFEATED OPPONENT CONFIDENTLY WALKS OUT OF THE STADIUM... I BELIEVE THE THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE RIGHT NOW IS DIRECTED TOWARDS BOTH THESE BOXERS FOR THEIR GREAT EFFORTS TONIGHT
RIKIISHI MAY HAVE WON,
....

AND IN THAT RESPECT, YOU MAY HAVE JUST BEEN UNLUCKY

WHETHER OR NOT TWO GREAT BOXERS EXIST IN THE SAME AGE FIGHTING FOR THE TOP SPOT IS PURELY UP TO LUCK...

THEY SAY BOXERS NEED BOTH SKILL AND LUCK...

I BELIEVE THAT FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART...

I REALLY AM FORTUNATE..

DON'T GIVE ME THAT, I CONSIDER MYSELF MORE THAN FORTUNATE...

UNLUCKY?

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO CONTINUE ON FIGHTING AN OPPONENT OF THAT CALIBRE EVEN AFTER BEING KNOCKED OUT SEVERAL TIMES...

THAT THE DEFEATED SHOULD BE RESPECTFULLY LEFT ALONE?

OR ARE YOU NOT AWARE OF THE UNSPOKEN RULE,

IF YOU WANT AN INTERVIEW, GO TO RIKIISHI'S DRESSING ROOM OVER THERE!

YOU PEOPLE HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH MY PLAYER.

SO GET OUT AND LEAVE US ALONE!

WHAT'S WITH THE RUCKUS?

DID YOU GET THE WRONG DRESSING ROOM?

HE'S DEAD...

RIKIISHI IS...

UMM, ABOUT THAT...

SAY IT ONE MORE TIME...
W-WHAT DID YOU SAY...?
I... I SAID...

WHICH WAS CAUSED BY THE BLOW TO HIS TEMPLE IN ROUND 6 AND THE CONSEQUENT AWKWARD LANDING WHERE HIS HEAD HIT THE ROPES...
IT WAS DUE TO THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF HIS SEVERE WEIGHT LOSS AND INTERNAL BRAIN HEMORRHAGE,
ACCORDING TO THE DOCTOR WHO EXAMINED HIM,

HE PASSED AWAY JUST NOW!
RIKISHI IS DEAD...

HE DIED...?

HA HA HA

CLEANING: HAPPYSCANS

TRANLATIONS: HOX

TYPESETTING: ARLES

あしたのジョー

ドドドドド
『第8巻、おわり』

スピリチュアルコミックシリーズ・既刊

チベット死者の書
桑田二郎

私たちは、死んだらどうなるのだろうか？　桑田二郎がチベット密教の真髄を、世界で初めて漫画化。

釈迦の真言
桑田二郎

桑田二郎が伝説に秘められた釈迦の真意を、絶対不変の宇宙法則〝いのちの真理〟に基づいて描く。

手塚治虫 昆虫図鑑
全1巻
小林準治

昆虫を心から愛し、多くの作品に昆虫を登場させた手塚治虫。その昆虫への情熱をこの一冊に集約。

高田好胤 まごころ説法
全1巻
川本コオ

白鳳大伽藍の復興に命を賭ける、奈良薬師寺・高田好胤管長の尊く気高い姿がここにある。

のんのんばあとオレ
全2巻
水木しげる

遠い昔……そこに楽園があった。水木しげるがのんのんばあとの、愉快な思い出を描く。NHK放映。

豪華愛蔵版 鉄腕アトム
①〜⑩
手塚治虫

漫画界の第一人者・手塚治虫の描く、お馴染み〝鉄腕アトム〟の全作品を完全網羅した豪華愛蔵版。

螢雪時代
①〜④
矢口高雄

心のやすらぎと、豊かな人間愛に溢れた、著者の中学時代の思い出を綴ったエッセーコミック。

講談社・コミックス 豪華愛蔵版シリーズ・既刊

デビルマン 全5巻 永井豪

恐怖のデーモン族とデビルマンが繰り広げる激闘を、永井豪が描く傑作・SFバイオレンス！

昭和史 全8巻 水木しげる

巨匠・水木しげるが昭和の世相に自らの半生を巧にミックスさせて描く異色歴史コミック。

あしたのジョー 全16巻 作・高森朝雄 画・ちばてつや

完結から20年以上が過ぎても、色褪せる事無く、読者を魅了し続ける、ボクシング漫画の決定版！

ヒットラー 全1巻 水木しげる

世界制覇の野望に燃える狂気の天才、アドルフ・ヒットラー。その凄絶な生涯を水木しげるが描く。

バイオレンスジャック 全7巻 永井豪

関東地獄地震で廃墟と化した東京に、奴が現われた。そいつの名はバイオレンスジャック！

釣りバカたち 全7巻 矢口高雄

美しき大自然のなかに、釣り人たちの気迫がこだまする。矢口高雄が描く本格的釣りコミック。

中短編集 ちばてつや 全4巻 ちばてつや

「餓鬼」①・②「蛍三七子」「モサ」、ちばてつやが青春のシーンを綴った、珠玉の傑作中短篇集。

ワイドKC・既刊

らくてんパパ

①〜④

植田まさし

読めば天国、笑う門には福来る。植田まさしが描く、四コマ漫画のホームラン王。

ピース・既刊

新編成 ロン先生の虫眼鏡

①〜③

作・光瀬龍

画・加藤唯史

不思議な昆虫やめずらしい昆虫がいっぱい。ロン先生と一緒にワンダーランドへさあ出発だ！

あすかあきお ハイパーサイエンス＝コミックシリーズ・既刊

第一巻 「1999 ノストラダムスの大真実」

ノストラダムスの実像と神秘の予言に迫る。

第二巻 「邪馬台国の大真実」

全ての旧説、通説を打ち破った驚異の新事実。

第三巻 「UFOの大真実」

UFO事件を操る、影の政府の正体とは!?

第四巻 「恐竜絶滅の大真実」

突然絶滅した恐竜の謎を、大胆に推理する。

第五巻 「プラズナーの正体」

人類最終兵器・プラズナーの秘密を解明！

第六巻 「エイリアンの大真実」

エイリアンの正体に迫る、衝撃の大真実。

リミックス 少年マガジン大図解 全3巻

不生出の天才、大伴昌司。彼が20数年前に残した偉大なる業績の数数が、今、我々の前に甦った。

復刻版 少年マガジン漫画全集 全3巻

創刊号から全ての連載漫画を完全網羅。もう一度会いたかった幻の名作・傑作がここに結集！

一発千金 FINAL パチンカーへの必勝道 全1巻

●鬼の棲む家 ●パターン認識 など、数々の名言を生んだ異色パチプロ・田山幸憲の教訓が満載。

スタジオペテ

釣りキチ三平
釣犬ハチ公編
釣りキチ同盟編
矢口高雄

〝釣りキチ三平〟のKCSP未収録作品集。これを読まなきゃ〝釣りキチ〟を読破したとは言えないゾ。

おがみ松吾郎
①〜⑥
伊藤実

暴力が大嫌いな小梅さんと、力でしか優しさを現わせない松吾郎のハラハラ・ドキドキストーリー。

KCデラックス・既刊

野球狂の詩
全6巻
水島新司

心から野球を愛する男たちの姿を、水島新司が情熱を込めて描く、本格的野球コミックの決定版。

100万$キッド
①〜⑥
石垣ゆうき

ギャンブル大好き少年・二階堂ひろしが、ラスベガスへ殴り込んでポーカー名人を次々にやっつける。

柴門ふみBEST SELECTION
全3巻
柴門ふみ

青春の可憐で、まばゆいラブ・ストーリーを集めた、著者自薦の中短編集。テレビ朝日系でドラマ化。

愛蔵版 キャンディ キャンディ
全2集
作・水木杏子
画・いがらしゆみこ

孤児のキャンディが意地悪な人達や、辛い事に出会っても、明るさを失わずに成長する様を描く。

日本妖怪大全
全1巻
水木しげる

巨匠・水木しげるが全国津々浦々に潜む、魑魅魍魎の数々を魅惑の幻想絵図で描いた決定版！

講談社・コミックス KCスペシャル・既刊

デビルマン 全3集 永井豪

デーモン（悪魔）を相手に戦うデビルマンは、真のメシアになれるのか？ 恐怖のSFロマン。

新デビルマン 全1集 永井豪

歴史を歪めようとするデーモンを追いかけて、デビルマンが時空を超えて異次元世界へ飛び込む！

鉄腕アトム 全7集 手塚治虫

正義の味方〝鉄腕アトム〟が、10万馬力のパワーで、地球の平和を乱す悪者たちをやっつける！

タイガーマスク 全8集 作・梶原一騎 画・辻なおき

これは、四角いリングの中に命を賭けた、スーパーマスクマンの愛と勇気のプロレス物語である。

仰げば尊し！ 全3集 所十三

超カゲキ教師・日向大に率いられた、オチコボレ野球部がマジで〝甲子園〟を目指す！

ヒップホップ応援団 全4集 うちやましゆうぞう

恐怖の武闘派、西麻布高校応援団団長・六段坂登。ケンカはメチャ強くて、かなりアブナイ!?

スーパーくいしん坊 全3集 作・牛次郎 画・ビッグ錠

スーパーくいしん坊の香介が作る料理は、ビックリ・アイデアが山盛りで、とってもデリシャス！

あなたは、この本を読んで、どんな感想をおもちになりましたか。

編集部では、この本についての読者のみなさまのご意見をおまちしています。

このつぎには、どんな作家のどんな漫画を読みたいと、お考えですか。「KCデラックス」にしてほしいと思う作品がありましたら、「読後の感想」とあわせて、左記あてに、どしどしお知らせください。

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KCデラックス係

KCデラックス—362
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